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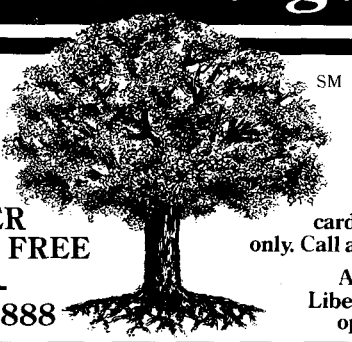

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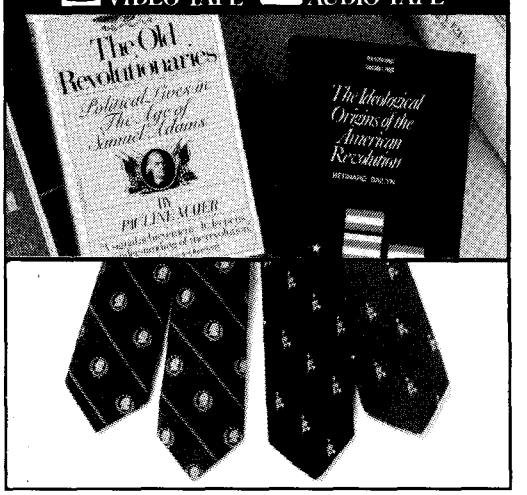

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE
Vol. 11, No. 7, July 1987

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A Publication of
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CHRONICLES (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $21 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CHRONICLES, P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

Editorial and Advertising Offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103. Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054. Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811. Subscription Department: P.O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.
U.S.A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.
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The Reagan Court has been a source of great expectation for conservatives. If only a few more superannuated justices would retire (or die), then *we* could have the court's unchecked authority in our own hands. A favorite target of pious hopes and voodoo dolls is the apparently senile Thurgood Marshall. An example of tokenism at its worst, Marshall has consistently opposed responsible self-government in his eagerness to construct an American elite class of feminists and minority politicians. What little he understands of the Constitution only arouses his ire. Early in May he publicly derided the Constitution's bicentennial and heaped scorn upon the bigoted framers who sacrificed "moral principles for self-interest."

Marshall is ingenuous enough to admit that the Founders would be appalled by his presence on the court. They would, but not nearly so much because of his color as for his manifest incompetence and the resentment he has displayed against their handiwork.

If we were to daydream, what would happen if a plague struck all the "liberal" justices? Exactly nothing. If we had any suspicion that Rehnquist, O'Connor, and Scalia would exercise judicial restraint and respect the Constitutional (and common law) protection of individual liberties, the recent decision against the Rotary should clear the air. The court unanimously upheld the right of California to compel local Rotaries to admit women. Every time the court takes a "states rights" position, it is inevitably to support a fashionable cause. Sure, it was a violation of civil liberties (like the right of association), but civil rights are small potatoes when the court sets out to decree political morality.

The justices forget that they are neither philosophers nor elected representatives; they are only lawyers paid to interpret the legal traditions of the U.S. Their personal ethical views are of no interest or relevance for the conduct of their office. But most judges seem possessed by a mania both to philosophize and to legislate.

At issue is the court's exercise of judicial review. Of the Founding Fathers, Hamilton thought the Supreme Court should be able to nullify only such laws as unquestionably violated the Constitution. Madison and Jefferson were much more cautious. Andrew Jackson only stated the obvious in declaring that "the opinion of the Judges has no more authority over Congress than the opinion of Congress has over the Judges."

Roger Taney, Jackson's Chief Justice who shared the President's views on the Constitution, has gone down in history as a great villain, because he refused to legislate morality from the bench. His decision on the case of runaway slave Dred Scott may have served to legitimize an immoral institution; it was, however, the only decision a responsible and law-abiding court could have handed down. As Lincoln argued in his First Inaugural Address, "If the policy of the government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by the decisions of the Supreme Court . . . the people will have ceased to be their own rulers."

It is up to Congress and the state legislatures to amend the Constitution; it is not up to the courts. Whether the judges are liberals or conservatives, it's all the same. The courts' overwhelming power gives as much reason for anxiety as a beautiful, vivacious wife: You would not entirely trust even your best friend or the bishop if they began to show an interest. Why is it better to trust, say, Paul Simon or Tim Wirth over Thurgood Marshall? Two reasons: first, that is the way the system was designed to work; second—and really more to the point—we are free to rid ourselves of the rascals on Capitol Hill whenever the electorate goes through one of its temporary fits of mental clarity, while nothing, not even brain death (in the cases of William O. Douglas and Thurgood Marshall), can halt the mischief of the Supreme Court.

Dressed in a dark business suit, wearing a tie and a brand-new trenchcoat, Troy Canty was led manacled in front of New York State Supreme Court Justice Stephen G. Crane. His head clean-shaven, Canty looked sullenly at TV cameras, out in force to register the latest twist in the Bernhard H. Goetz case.

On December 22, 1984, dressed somewhat differently, Troy Canty was riding the graffiti-decorated New York subway, together with James Ramseur, Barry Allen, and Darrell Cabey. "Hey Troy," James Ramseur told his friend, lying on the subway car bench, "why's that white guy looking at you?"

Turning towards the "white guy," Bernhard Goetz, Troy Canty said, "How are you?" Then he got up and, together with Ramseur, Cabey, and Allen, approached Goetz. "Give me $5.00," he said.

Turning around so his four unwelcome new acquaintances would not see what he was doing, Bernhard Goetz pulled a gun and shot each of them once. Darrell Cabey he shot twice, severing his spine and leaving him invalid.

Then Bernhard Goetz left the car and walked away into one of the tunnels, not to be heard of until a week later, when he went to the Concord, New Hampshire, police station and confessed what he did into a tape recorder. Asked whether he wanted a lawyer present, Goetz answered, "And what . . . a lawyer would do . . . is to tell me what not to say. . . . You get off on technicalities and that just makes me sick . . . you should be judged . . . on the truth, and what is right and wrong."

Unlike career thug Danny Escobedo, whose murder conviction was re-

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versed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1964, because his confession had been obtained in the absence of a lawyer, Bernhard Goetz was concerned with "right and wrong." Unlike convicted felon Troy Canty, Goetz was also concerned with the "truth," which Canty presented differently at each of his public appearances. Whether Judge Crane, who ruled as inadmissible evidence an interview Canty gave to ABC's *20/20*, has the same concerns, may be open to doubt.

Unlike James Ramseur, brought in to tell the truth from a prison where he is doing eight and a half years for rape and sodomy of a pregnant woman, Bernhard Goetz so far has not refused to testify. His lawyer, Bary I. Slotnick, unlike Barry Allen's lawyer, who advised his client not to take the witness stand, has been given ample coverage in the newspapers which depict him as a Mafia confidant and a glory seeker.

Although he is the only one of Goetz's assailants not given immunity, Barry Allen's refusal to talk has been withheld from the jury by Judge Crane. Just what it is that Mr. Allen is afraid of, the judge has not disclosed.

On the other hand, Judge Crane has labeled "hearsay" the evidence of Ms. Arnetha Gilbert that the youths had run out of the subway shouting, "He shot me for nothing. . . . I just asked for $5.00," because, according to the *New York Times*, the youths were apparently alert and "coherent," "so their statements could have been calculated to absolve themselves." As a proper guardian, the judge has repeatedly ordered the jurors to disregard Mr. Slotnick's defense, taking care that they form no opinion the bench does not have in mind for them.

Whatever the outcome of the latest trial, despite all the Constitutional safeguards against double jeopardy, it is apparent that Bernhard Goetz is facing overpowering odds. The entire structure of the managerial state requires the existence of an occasionally troublesome welfare class, and like a good feudal seigneur the state of New York is determined to defend its retainers, whatever they might have done. Bernhard Goetz's revolt against the state-condoned terror and the humiliation of the New York subways—quite rightly—has been perceived as a threat against a corrupt despotic system.

The questions raised by the Goetz case boil down to this: Can the state, which refuses to protect citizens from violence, at the same time prevent decent people from arming themselves in self-defense? "The issue," said Bernhard Goetz in his taped confession, "isn't the $5.00 or something like that, that's unimportant, you know . . . it was they wanted to play with me. . . . In New York, I feel, and a lot of people feel, you have to have a gun, but they don't let you, to them that is a big crime, they have you, also they have you trapped . . . you're in a situation where you must carry a gun and the reality, the reality they are so ugly that, so, you see . . . "

In a crazy dance of technicalities (who stood where, doing and saying what when the shooting occurred), Bernhard Goetz stands an excellent chance of losing, unless the jury performs as well as the two previous New York juries who acquitted him. Whatever the outcome of his trial, the state of New York's attack on the right of self-defense will inspire contempt and outrage in most of the U.S. Unfortunately, a courtroom is not a two-way mirror, and Bernhard Goetz cannot reverse his position. Judge Crane and Assistant Attorney Waples are secure in their indignation.

Catastrophic health insurance—already endorsed by the President and now on the fast track to approval in Congress—will soon shift the economic burden of huge unexpected medical bills from the elderly to the federal government. But already some members of Congress are complaining that a much more inclusive public health-care plan is needed. Unfortunately, most policymakers forget how much the nation's health bills have been affected by the fragmentation of the family.

In recent years, an increasing number of young people are postponing marriage until they have had a chance to taste the excitement of the singles scene. But the fern bar and the health spa may turn out to be way stations for singles headed for the hospital—or cemetery. Writing recently in *Social Science and Medicine*, Drs. Catherine K. Reissman and Naomi Gerstel point out that singles suffer from higher rates of disease, disability, mental neuroses, and mortality—a pattern that holds for both sexes and for every ethnic group.

Divorce brings its own health problems. According to Professor Harold Morowitz of Yale University, "Being divorced and a non-smoker is slightly less dangerous than smoking a pack a day and staying married," adding facetiously that "if a man's marriage is driving him to heavy smoking, he has a delicate statistical decision to make." Divorced and single people also stay in the hospital longer than married people suffering from the same illnesses, and the risk of cancer and heart disease is much higher among the single and divorced than among marrieds. This is not good news at a time when almost half of American marriages end in divorce.

More than half of the mothers of small children now work, but few realize the health risks of day care. A 1984 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that day-care children are 12 times more likely than children in traditional homes to catch the dangerous disease responsible for most cases of childhood meningitis. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) also recently reported that "outbreaks of gastroenteritis caused by bacteria, viruses, and parasites; . . . hepatitis A; and vaccine-preventable diseases have been documented in day-care groups."

Many observers now predict that rising costs will eventually cause the collapse of Medicare. According to Alexa Stuifbergen of the University of Texas at Austin, "Policymakers are increasingly looking to the family as a hedge against the rising cost of health care services."

This rediscovery of family responsibility could mark a healthy first step in reshaping public health policy. But unless this move is matched by tax reforms that support the traditional family, the family will be pushed to the end of the line to receive government benefits and pushed to the front of the line to pay for those benefits.

—Bryce J. Christensen

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CULTURAL CONSERVATION *by Thomas Fleming*

A few years back, when the air was fresh and the world was new, some of us thought that the election of Ronald Reagan was only the beginning of the beginning of "morning in America." It is a common mistake. Some decades have an identity for those who set their mark upon them. In periods like the 1890's, the 1920's, and the 1960's, while most people went about their business of working, living, and dying, if you were a decadent poet in London, a stockbroker or novelist in New York, a student at Berkeley, Madison, or Columbia, it was an age of gold. Some true believers manage to keep the faith right up till the end: The best social critic of the counterculture, Philip Slater, published his New Age prophecy—*The Pursuit of Loneliness*—in 1970, and there are conservatives who, at this very minute, are planning the last phase of their *coup d'etat*.

It is hardly likely. For all the great successes of the administration, the important fact remains that the enemy is still in undisputed possession of the major institutions that control the formation of attitudes and the building of character: churches, schools, "the arts," the press are all enemy territory. Students may rebel, for a time, as students do; they may vote Republican or support the draft to spite their graybeard professors; but in the end most will be reabsorbed into the radicalized mainstream of American culture.

The great successes of American conservatism before Reagan were due to the intellectual or imaginative power of a few outstanding men. Something happens to a student who has read *Witness* or *The Conservative Mind* or seen Mr. Buckley in debate. An aspiring writer or intellectual who has learned to appreciate Frost and Eliot and Andrew Lytle has taken the first steps toward committing treason against the regime. In the heat of the moment, many conservatives have forgotten that their real source of strength did not lie in resentment against the welfare state or the million and one little pamphlets on SDI or Central America that are choking the U.S. Postal System. Under the thumb of President Joe Biden, we shall have the leisure to remember.

It is a good sign that some conservatives at Hillsdale, ISI, and The Heritage Foundation have been taking stock. Recent issues of *Modern Age* and *Policy Review* have included trenchant reevaluations of conservative ideas, and Hillsdale's Center for Constructive Alternatives has held a series of important conferences on the state of American culture. The most ambitious reconsideration of conservative principles has been undertaken by Paul Weyrich through the Institute for Government and Politics arm of the Free Congress Research and Education Foundation. Weyrich's "cultural conservatism" project has resulted in three essays (published as "Essays on Our Times"), a response by Chester Finn, and a draft proposal, "Cultural Conservatism: A New National Agenda," completed in March. Taken together, these statements represent a serious attempt to rebuild a conservative ideology out of the rubble of New Right populism and the disarray of Neoconservative ideology.

For Weyrich himself, a "cultural conservative" is anyone who affirms the basic traditions and principles of Western culture. William Lind, who directs the project, sketched out four major themes in his essay: first, that traditional values are necessary for "individual fulfillment"; second, that the breakdown in conventional morality is leading to serious social problems; third, that "society, including government, must play an active role in supporting tradi-

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tional values"; and finally, that in looking for solutions we must take a long view that recognizes the wisdom of our ancestors and considers the needs of future generations.

In an article in *The American Spectator* (November '86), Chester Finn describes the project's goals as "unexceptionable" and attempts to put meat on the bones and muscles provided by Weyrich and Lind. Finn, an assistant secretary of education, lists 10 cardinal tenets with corresponding actions to be undertaken by the nation's educational systems. Recognition of our common cultural tradition requires, for example, the transmission of "cultural literacy" in the schools; since democracy is "the best form of government known to man," we must "stop teaching that all political systems are equally legitimate"; and since our common culture is symbolized by heroes and holidays, schoolchildren must be taught to "understand why we observe Independence Day, Memorial Day, Martin Luther King's birthday, and Easter."

Most of what Finn had to say is, to use his own word, "unexceptionable," especially coming from a Department of Education employee. Some conservatives, however, stuck at the elevation of democracy to a first principle. Much of the Old Right had been explicitly elitist. In addition to European Catholics like Thomas Molnar and Erick von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, most traditionalist writers had celebrated the virtues of order, stability, and indeed aristocracy. The cult of democracy does not, after all, include among its worshipers Irving Babbitt or T.S. Eliot, Albert Jay Nock or Richard Weaver, Russell Kirk or James Burnham. Indeed, the editor of *TAS* has been derided (in *The New Republic*) for insisting on the term *republic*. A great deal of mischief—New Deals and Five Year Plans—has been done in democracy's name, and conservatives were supposed to be providing a sort of loyal opposition—republican or elitist—to the spirit of the age.

Even more to the point was William Hawkins' response in a letter to *TAS* (February '87):

> The U.S. is a democracy and conservatives must work within it. However, democracy merely defines the political arena in which elites battle for the power to advance their agendas. Democracy is not itself one of the values for which conservatives enter the arena. . . . Democracy is not a necessary condition for cultural conservatism, nor will it by nature advance conservatism. On the contrary, democracy can only work if conservative values are so deeply engrained that they will guide the majority in a responsible exercise of its power.

In most quarters, this would have been received as an unimpeachable statement of the conservative position, from an economist who has written for *Chronicles* and *National Review* and had his work quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*. Assistant Secretary Finn's curt rejoinder had a vaguely inquisitional ring:

> Anyone who doesn't start with a deep and abiding affection for and belief in democracy has no standing, in my view, to participate in the conversations about "cultural conservatism"—or about much else!

But an open discussion on these questions is precisely what is essential, if cultural conservatism is to get past first base, and it is the neoconservative Finn's willingness to debate on Weyrich's own New Right turf that gives the project its air of excitement. (Norman Podhoretz, another neoconservative, has also commented on the project, in a newspaper column.)

To their credit, the framers of the draft "Cultural Conservatism: A New National Agenda" are remarkably open to a variety of viewpoints. Lind is a sort of "neoliberal" Democrat, and his chief collaborator is the Old Right Catholic William Marshner. On specific questions of policy, the draft is solid, especially on family issues. We might die happy if either party incorporated these prescriptions into its platform. The draft agenda even lashes out against the elevation of "procedural values" like equality or the free market over traditional moral principles, but beyond details it is hard to find a quarrel between Finn and Weyrich's group. Both agree that the creation and dissemination of a cultural ideology is a legitimate government activity. All appear to believe that such an ideology can be devised without insisting on any religious or metaphysical foundation. Lind, for example, declares that his creed "does not require anyone to believe traditional values are true *absolutely*, that they derive from God, from natural law, or from some other source outside secular human experience. It asserts only that Western culture is functionally true."

But the revolutionaries who have been reconstructing society since the 1790's are not misguided defenders of civilization: They loathe our cultural traditions and moral principles precisely because they are the bulwarks and foundation of everything the revolutionaries seek to destroy: the family, individual freedom and responsibility, social stability.

But it is in the metaphysics of culture that problems begin to emerge. In what sense can any culture be described as true, much less functionally true? If we speak of the culture of the Navaho or the Nuer, we would never dream of saying it is true or false, but the cultural conservatives take a curiously idealistic view of culture as "the ways of thinking, living and behaving that sustain a people and underlie its achievements . . . a nation's collective mind, its sense of right and wrong, the way it perceives reality, and its definition of self." While this sort of definition might do for a cognitive anthropologist or a disciple of George Berkeley, it will never do as the basis of a bread-and-butter political movement. "It's all in the mind, yuh know" is the Beatles' version of reality, not—one had thought—the conservative tradition. Early anthropologists did, it is true, include knowledge and beliefs in their definition of culture, but they also included the more concrete manifestations of art and law. Since it is virtually impossible to know what a man really believes, cultural anthropologists had to concentrate on folk tales, codes of behavior, kinship systems, and artifacts. The rules of etiquette and literary forms are more palpable than mere beliefs. Our neighbor's moral views are

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hard to discern, but the books he reads and the code of manners he lives by are a fair indication of his "culture," and what is more, they present opportunities for correction.

We are caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, cultural norms have no transcendent origin either in the will of God or in the laws of nature; on the other hand, culture itself is elevated to the status of Mind, a sort of invisible god. But if our cherished "values" (whatever that vulgarism can be supposed to mean) do not derive either from nature or from nature's God, then they can be defended only on the limited grounds that some of us in *this* culture happen to find them useful; but we are in no position to argue that incest, adultery, and bad manners are things bad in themselves.

Cultural conservatives are not alone in believing that the current *Kulturkampf* is being waged by friendly parties who have fallen out over a misunderstanding. All we have to do is explain to the other side, politely, of course, that their views are undermining the status quo, and they will apologize and help us to set things right. But the revolutionaries who have been reconstructing society since the 1790's are not misguided defenders of civilization: They loathe our cultural traditions and moral principles precisely because they are the bulwarks and foundation of everything the revolutionaries seek to destroy: the family, individual freedom and responsibility, social stability. Our enemies have their own traditions, their own principles, their own culture. Not only that, they have their own gods on their side—Social Justice, Equality, and, above all, the Future. Chester Finn is smart enough to realize that few atheists will sign on to any form of cultural conservatism; still, he maintains, "I have said nothing that would oblige a bona fide cultural conservative to believe in God, much less to participate in any particular branch of organized religion."

Here at *Chronicles* we are constantly barraged with manuscripts explaining why conservatives don't have to believe in God or value religion. I always ask the same question: What is it you think you are conserving? We used to have a simple name for this civilization of ours: It was called Christendom. By using knives and forks a man ate like a Christian; by displaying charity or good manners he was said to do something like a Christian. Actual religious faith is something else. Many of Christendom's staunchest defenders have been, like David Hume, skeptical of theology and irritated by the clergy's pretentions—every sect and denomination is overrun with its own version of the Bakkers. It would, in any case, be bad manners to inquire into what our friends and allies really believe deep in their hearts; however, we do expect self-described conservatives to "act like" Christians and leave metaphysical speculations to philosophers. Otherwise their only effect will be to dishearten the strongest conservative strain in the American populace—believing Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Mormons.

"The long march through the institutions" of American culture was accomplished long ago, but there is no sign that the cultural conservatives have a plan for recapturing the citadels. No party can be built around such abstractions as "democracy" or "traditional values." I can imagine a coalition of Darwinists and Fundamentalists to defend human nature against social engineering, because both sides accept the roots of human behavior as givens, but cultural conservatism excludes any such alliance based on natural law. I can also conceive of a comfortable relationship between people who share a taste in music and books, but on this point of serious music and literature, the cultural conservatives are remarkably reticent. The draft statement declares explicitly that the most important component of culture is not high culture but the values of ordinary people. Near the end, they concede that aesthetics does matter but confine their attention to a paragraph on the international style in architecture.

There are issues more pressing than the performance of a Bach partita or the decay of rhyme. However, it is a serious, indeed a deadly mistake to dismiss serious art so cavalierly. High art is really only "high" in a civilization that is falling apart. How high were Shakespeare or Beethoven or Aeschylus? All had broad, middle-class followings—the sort of people who today read James Mitchener novels or tune in to "easy listening" stations on the radio. Where, after all, do ideas come from? It can take a generation or two for the pernicious nonsense of a Voltaire or a Dewey to seep down to the level of pamphlets, magazines, and television shows. Conspicuous figures like newsreaders and TV producers are little more than mouthpieces that parrot what they learned from professorial mouthpieces 30 years ago. The highbrow fancies of the last century, which became the middlebrow fads of *The New Republic* in the 20's now fuel the efforts of Norman Lear and Dan Rather. The best available escape from the revolutionized mass culture is the direct and powerful appeal of an artistic masterpiece, the effect of what Russell Kirk calls the moral imagination.

Mention of Dr. Kirk brings us to the nub of the problem. As a man of letters—essayist, literary historian, and writer of tales—Kirk is in a long line of English and American writers and critics who have turned their attention to cultural problems. In nearly every period of English literature, there have been one or more pundits who have given the law on taste, fashion, and morals. Ben Jonson may have

(continued on page 18)

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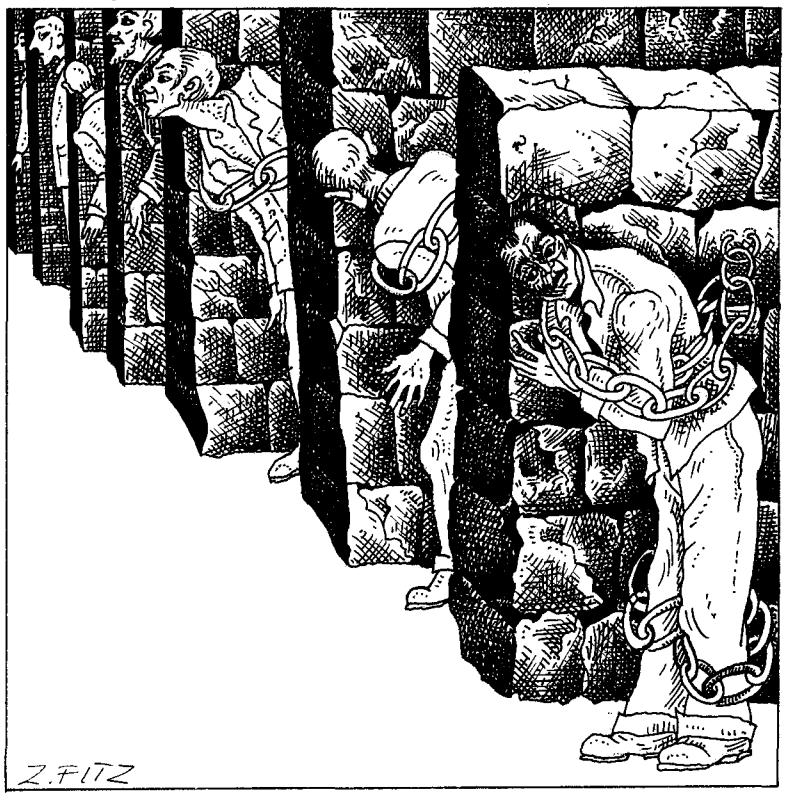
TRANSCENDENT MEMORY *by Anthony Harrigan*

The significance of the past—the past of a minute or an hour ago, 100 years ago, or 5,000 years ago—is of consuming interest to me; many writers are concerned with the effects of time on people and institutions. The past provides writers with most of their raw material. Proust had only to taste a sweet, and the world of the past flooded his mind with recollections. I am intrigued with the nature and operation of time. How do we get from here to there? How did we get from there to here?

Movement through time is complex and often bewildering. We are very different at various ages because of the passage of time. We identify blocks of time in our life or in historical existence. We recall in vivid detail scenes from our childhood or young adulthood. We remember crises and struggles, traumas, and placid stretches of life. Something that happened to us at age 10 or 25 strikes us as real as what happens to us today. We go back into time and, remembering, feel as we felt earlier in our existence. We also may be sensitive to the time in which our parents or ancestors lived. We may, in our mind, recreate moments or entire periods of their existence. If we are students of history, we may come to believe that we understand a distant era so well that it is real to us. Standing alongside the columns of the Temple at Sounion, I once felt transported to the days of the ancient Greeks who voyaged over the wine-dark sea.

But what of the actual process of time, the ticking away of hours and years? Do we sense that at all? An anonymous contributor to *The New Yorker* discussed that in an extraordinarily perceptive way some time back. She described a stay in the countryside, while awaiting the birth of her child. "One evening," she wrote, "in a jungly place near the beach I heard a woodpecker rapping a tree: rat-a-tat. That was the present, and gone forever as soon as it was done." She said she was listening to time. She wrote of the various rhythms all around her—and us. There were, she said, old-time sounds—the Angelus ringing in a church across the field, a train whistle, a faraway barking dog. These sounds clashed with another contemporary tempo. There was, she noted, "changiness in a place that was country and is slowly becoming a kind of city." There was the growl of tractors and other earth-moving machinery, of carpenters building new structures. "I listened," she wrote, "for the tempi of my parents', my grandparents', my great grandparents' lives, each tempo unfolding like a separate gesture within the historical tempo of this place where all of us had lived." She also tried to listen for the tempi of history in a broader sense.

I suspect we would profit from listening to time; listening brings understanding. I am especially interested in what we hear when there aren't any contemporary sounds in the air, as often happens at the village of Sewanee, Tennessee, where I live. What do we hear in a truly quiet place? Do we hear time passing? Is time *real* in a truly quiet place? Sometimes I ask myself, in my small and very quiet community, what happened to the small and quiet world of 100 years ago? Where is the world of Sewanee that existed in 1885? Has it truly vanished, or do we simply not see it? I asked the same question when I visited Carnac, France, in the dead of winter, and saw the miles-long stone avenues erected by an unknown people, 5,000 years ago. I wondered: Could I hear anything in that winter silence? Is the world of our early European ancestors truly lost there, or at Stonehenge or similar sites? Can we hear or discern



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something if we listen very carefully? In other words, can we reach the past through a heightened awareness? Do worlds linger? Certainly, the modern mind is not inclined to believe any such thing. The modern mind lacks historical consciousness or a sense of what lies beyond history. In much of the modern world, the folkchain of memory is broken. People don't live in one place any more, as the popular song of the early 1970's rightly said. There are discontinuities of time and place. With the discontinuities comes loss of what has been called transcendent memory.

I am speaking here of something more than historical consciousness which comes out of living in a traditional community, but which also can emerge from a reading of history, and the understanding gained from books. The links between the present and the past may be more than the historical clues we have discovered in libraries or diggings. These may be mystical, that is, beyond rational explanation and analysis. The anonymous contributor to *The New Yorker* whom I quoted earlier certainly is someone who derived understanding in ways unacceptable to a historian or social scientist. She was hearing, or trying to hear, sounds that weren't heard by others. She was listening for nature's clock in a way that wouldn't occur to most people in our time. She stretched her imagination, commenting that "The score of nature within which we listen to our history is enormous and complex in a way completely beyond the imagination of our ancestors."

We now are able to see nature in terms of our knowledge of evolution, geology, and galaxies. To be sure, even a very short while ago people thought of the world as young—perhaps of 6,000 years duration—and lacked all understanding of the forces in nature—from the atom to outer space. But the anonymous contributor to *The New Yorker* failed to note that modern man has lost an awareness of nature—something more than an awareness of history—that people 5,000 or 6,000 years ago were keenly alive to. The great stone monuments of Western Europe—40,000 or 50,000 of them—are silent witnesses to a lost understanding. They put *our* understanding to a test. We aren't sure how a scanty population, without technology, was able to put the Stonehenges and Carnacs in place. More importantly, we don't understand *why* they did so. What drove them to use their resources in this manner? What theories or conceptions lay behind the arrangements and relationship of the megaliths? Theirs was not a haphazard disposition of monumental stones but a great design, the features of which we can't fathom.

Endless questions arise from the megalithic monuments, such as what were these stone structures for, in the ancient societies which constructed them? These and other queries make us realize that we have no idea of the builders' motivation, or insight into the content of their beliefs. It's humbling for us, modern men and women, to realize that our knowledge of science may have cost us the understanding possessed by our forebears in ancient times. Yet we must use intuition to rediscover it, at least as much as archaeological analysis.

Archaeological analysis is not to be discounted, of course. Modern times have produced the most extraordinary tools for reconstructing the life of hundreds and thousands of years ago. By examining carvings, pollen, remnants of food, the wear and tear on human bones, as well as patterns cut in or painted on rock, we can retell the very ancient past. The future offers an exciting promise that we shall know a great deal more about our past. Undoubtedly, we shall discover what caused human groups long ago either to survive or to perish.

In an electronic world it seems all the more important to attempt to rediscover our mystical bond with the past. To live only in and for the moment, or in anticipation of the future, is to be deprived in life. To emphasize the past should not mean failing to savor the present. A balanced view of life certainly involves what Richard Magruder called an "appreciation of smaller increments" of existence. Those who are ill and thus aware of their mortality often develop a heightened appreciation of the present. They treasure every moment left to them, truly grateful for each additional day.

The person with both a transcendent memory and an appreciation of the present, however, has not exhausted the potential of the human consciousness. For those with a mystical awareness, the religious, there is the present, the past—the world of transcendent memory—and, finally, that which lies beyond history—eternity, where human life is conjoined with the divine plan of existence. Not everyone is capable of developing a sense of eternity. Only the saints may do so to the fullest, though untold multitudes across the globe strain to know what lies beyond history, life, and civilization. My own sense of what lies beyond is very limited, an article of faith imparted to me in my childhood. My personal sense of mystery is much more closely associated with the past of our race, and with the illuminating memory that reaches that past.

In contemplating time and searching for its meaning, we attempt to answer one of the largest questions we can address: What is a human being? We can't get a complete answer to that by studying the behavior of only our contemporaries. We have to review the human record in its

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

A Latin America

"The conflict of 1846-1848 was one in which the United States was clearly justified in its actions. It was a conflict in which our armed forces performed brilliantly and in which we exacted the just fruits of our victory. This also was a conflict which the Mexican government deliberately sought, one which it confidently expected to win. This war, most properly, should be recalled as 'the War of Mexican Aggression.'"

—from "The War of Mexican Aggression"
by Odie B. Faulk

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fullest. Modern men and women are not the first to seek an answer to this question, to explore their potential, or to search for fulfillment. Men and women have been doing so since the dawn of consciousness. While most of life, as Peter Levi has said, has been the plodding process of grazing cattle or the spinning of cloth, it would be absurd to think of our ancestors' minds as less developed than ours. The questions we ask ourselves today undoubtedly were also posed by them, that is, the fundamental, interior questions —those that don't depend on current information for answers. Indeed, we turn to Plato, Aristotle, and the writers of the Old and New Testaments—thinkers and chroniclers of antiquity—when we want to ponder the ambiguities of our intellectual and moral existence.

As we grow older, our memories become more important to us, and we seek transcendent memories, forced by the knowledge that in a very short time we too will become a memory. I was much struck by an article by Dr. Benjamin Spock, who spoke of aging and physical death as a passage from man to memory. This prompted me to ponder the differences between a living person and the memory of him, and the difference between memory and a dream. For those who have grown up in the historic Catholic tradition, whether Roman or Anglican, Jesus is a historical figure who died on a cross in Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago as well as a living person. This duality extends to a host of figures from the Christian past. The old Episcopal Book of Common Prayer reminds us that we are surrounded by "the communion of saints." Indeed, in the course of life, one encounters a number of people—many in the most humble circumstances—whose impact is so intense that they are ever in mind. They remain a living presence long after they die physically. In such cases, it is hard to say whether the memory is less powerful than the man. And what, philosophically, is the difference between those physically alive but sleepwalking through their daily existence and those physically dead but alive in the being of others? I am not enough of a philosopher to explain or understand that, but I am aware of its reality.

Then what do we make of dreams? A dream, like a memory, isn't in the here and now. Yet we contend that memories bear the imprint of reality, whereas dreams are unreal. Here the distinction seems clearer: A memory is an accurate or reasonably accurate reconstruction of a real event. A dream, on the other hand, is a disconnected mental construction, drawn from the bits and pieces of reality. Memories shape the present by giving coherence to the stream of events as they occur. Dreams, however, are often a distorting force in life; we wonder why they are part of the activity of the mind. At times, they seem to be dysfunctional, confusing, and disturbing. At other times, what takes place in a dream confirms the dreamer's basic outlook on a situation. Why they sometimes seem dysfunctional, and why they sometimes buttress a person's values is a great mystery. The most mysterious dreams may be those which recur in life and which don't seem to contain any special meaning or symbolism. One that I have had countless times features a bicycle ride I took when I was 11 or 12, past some empty lots on a street in Garden City, Long Island, during the late 1930's. This is a dream based on a memory, for I often rode past those lots near the home of Mrs. Townsend, an elderly friend of my mother. Nothing happened on these rides, or in or near these lots, and nothing happens in the recurring dream; I simply ride past the lots and look across them. Certainly, there isn't any *motif* in this dream. Yet it has come back again and again over almost 50 years.

What were the memories and dreams of our ancestors 4,000 or 5,000 years ago? What was their mental universe? Was it crowded with myths and fears of ancient folklore, or did our distant forebears organize reality in ways not very dissimilar to our own? These ancient memories and dreams, of course, are an alien world irretrievably lost; but, then, so is the world of a mere 300 years ago when the American colonies were first settled. We have documentation of that period, and we can detect profound differences in how our closer forefathers discerned the world. Their mental universe clearly was unlike our own. What excited their emotions is not exactly what excites ours in the late 20th century. Even upon reading a relatively recent document, such as Mary Boykin Chestnut's *Diary*, written during the American Civil War, we are surprised by the conversations she reported, by the concerns and outlook of those who figure in it. The detection of these shifts in perception through various periods of life produces what may be described as the sadness of history. It is so hard to capture the real feelings of people in other times. Their mentality is largely unmapped territory, though attempts to explore it offer a fascinating challenge.

We must be careful, of course, not to let our imaginations run away with us when envisioning mental universes of the past. Intuition is important, but we have to bear in mind the staggering change in the West since medieval times, let alone the age when Carnac and Stonehenge were constructed. Robert Darnton, a pioneering contemporary historian, has reminded us that the human condition has changed so much even since the early 18th century "that we can hardly imagine the way it appeared to people whose lives were really hasty, brutish, and short." Much of history, then, is opaque; we see through a glass darkly. In the comfortable, healthy civilization of the present-day West it is hard to appreciate that life in the not-so-distant past was largely a struggle against untimely death. Our great-great-grandparents in the early 19th century were having 10 or more children, most of whom never survived infancy. The imprint of death, therefore, was immensely greater in the past than it is in our era. We need to be very aware of this impact as we attempt to chart the mental landscapes of past men.

Nevertheless, our expeditions into the past are among the most exciting on which we can embark, offering enormous potentials for discovery of new insights into life. The more we study the past and attempt to explore it, the more we learn of the gaps in our knowledge. Endless mysteries of the past, both the recent and very distant, are there to be penetrated. Intellectually voyaging to the dim shores of bygone worlds is one of the greatest challenges open to modern man. Using our archaeological tools, historical records, reason and intuition, raising our consciousness through cultivation of transcendent memory, it is possible to enter into lost realms to a considerable degree, with the satisfaction that such knowledge brings.

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A SUPERFLUOUS MAN *by Martin Morse Wooster*

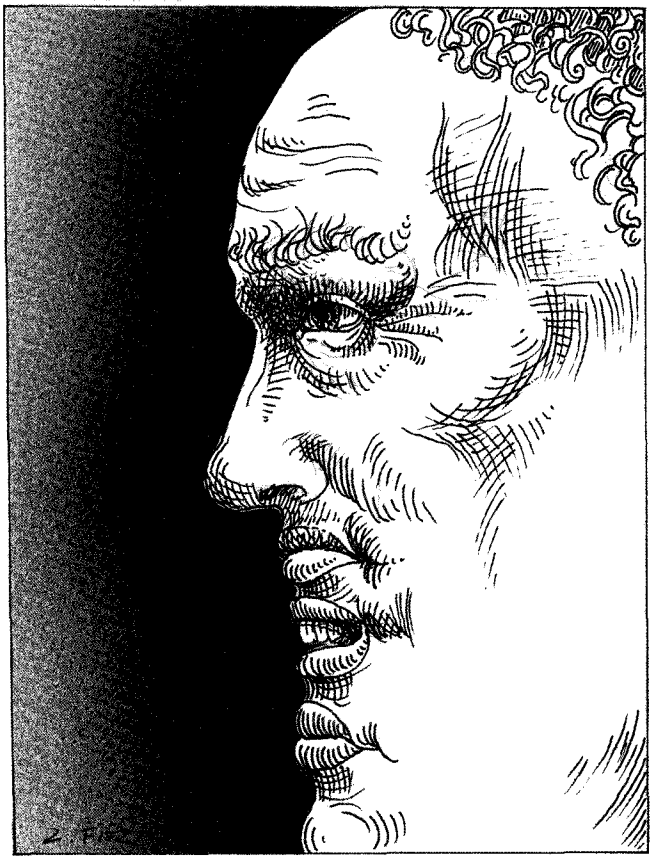
"I once voted at a presidential election. There being no real issue at stake, I cast my vote for Jefferson Davis of Mississippi. I knew Jeff was dead, but I voted on Artemus Ward's principle that if we can't have a live man who amounts to anything, by all means let's have a first-class corpse."

—Albert Jay Nock, *A Journal of These Days*

One of the hazards of Washington life is the risk of running into people whose politics is their religion. You see them everywhere at receptions, eyes blazing with unhallowed fire, proselytizing for a cause whose victory is always within sight.

The right-wing political fanatic wages war on the pleasures of life. If only pornographic magazines, mood-altering drugs (except vermouth), and premarital sex could be banned, then Americans would stand tall, keep their hair short, and vote a straight Republican ticket until they die.

The left-wing political fanatic has her mind on one Important Subject, which is the core of her existence.



Anyone who does not spend every waking moment worrying about the nuclear freeze or South Africa is simply not a *caring person*.

Whenever I cross paths with one of these people, I wish I had a copy of Albert Jay Nock's *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*. I would fortify myself with Nock's advice. "One of the most offensive things about the society in which I later found myself was a monstrous itch for changing people," he wrote. "It seemed to me a society made up of congenital missionaries, bent on reforming and standardizing people according to a pattern of their own devising . . . the moment one *wishes* to change anybody, one becomes like the socialists, vegetarians, prohibitionists; and this is, as Rabelais says, 'a terrible thing to think upon.'"

Few people read Nock these days. That is a shame. Nock was one of the great curmudgeons of American journalism, a first-class grouch whose opinions seasoned dozens of issues of *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, *The American Mercury*, and most of the other major journals of the 20's and 30's. "Albert Jay Nock belongs to the great American tradition of the judicious eccentric," says Jacques Barzun, "a genuine political mind, a true scholar, an intellectual hedonist whose classic prose is graced with insidious wit."

Nock spent the first four decades of his life searching for a vocation. Born in Brooklyn in 1870, he was graduated from St. Stephen's College, later "reorganized off the face of the earth" to become Bard College. Nock drifted through the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, first as a semi-professional baseball player, then as an Episcopalian minister. In 1908, he went through a messy divorce which led him to abandon wife, children, and church for a year of recovery in Brussels. When he returned, Nock began his second career as a writer.

For the first 10 years of his career, he was seen as a liberal. He spent five years as an editor at *The American Magazine*, a muckraking monthly featuring the work of Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell. Steffens remembered Nock fondly in his memoirs as "that finished scholar [who] put in mastered English for us editorials which expressed with his grave smile and chuckling tolerance 'our' interpretations of things human."

In 1914, Nock met Francis Neilson, a prominent politician in the British Liberal Party. Neilson had the manuscript of *How Diplomats Make War*, a study of the machinations of the British Foreign Office. Nock found a publisher and provided an introduction, stating that Neilson's work would "shift our sympathies squarely away from the whole filthy prairie-dog's nest of traditional diplomacy, wherever found."

Neilson was to repay Nock's favor many times over. In 1917, he married Helen Swift, heir to the meat-packing fortune. Mrs. Neilson paid for Nock's salary at *The Nation*, where for two years he assisted Oswald Garrison Villard in

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attacking the Versailles Treaty and Allied intervention in the Russian civil war. Nock, however, was unhappy working for another editor. He wanted his own journal, and, thanks to Mrs. Neilson's money, he was to get his wish.

Nock and Neilson edited *The Freeman* from 1920 until 1924. Modeled after the *Spectator*, it was planned as "a Radical paper," in the tradition of Cobden and Bright, "opposed to all the nostrums of Socialism and bureaucratic paternalism."

Most of the intellectuals prominent in the early 20's wrote for *The Freeman*; its pages were filled with articles by Charles Beard, Hendrik Van Loon, Bertrand Russell, and H.L. Mencken. The literary pages, edited by Van Wyck Brooks, featured reviews by Conrad Aiken, John Dos Passos, and Carl Sandburg. Nock was the impresario of *The Freeman*, supervising production and writing dozens of articles, blasting the Harding administration for everything from high-tariff policies to punitive measures against a defeated Germany. Yet even as Nock frenetically produced diatribe after diatribe, the quietism which was to mark his philosophy was already beginning to emerge.

It was on August 11, 1920, that Nock first discussed the idea of the "superfluous man." "Our universities boast that they are becoming helpmates of business," Nock wrote. "The machinery of business speeds forward faster and faster, and, as it speeds, human nature becomes, beneath the surface, more and more recalcitrant. The most cynical, the most thick-skinned of people begin to ask themselves where they are going and for what purpose."

Nock believed that "these bolshevists of the spirit . . . wanderers who can not find themselves, who can not fit in," could not be redeemed by commercial America. It was only by examining the masterpieces of the past, the "great companions who have given to mankind its literature and its religion," that the American wanderer could find his spiritual roots and finally flourish. "Having access to the whole world of psychology, philosophy and history," Nock concluded, "they are under the free moral obligation to see themselves in the common sunlight."

It was that sunlight—eternally emanating from the classics of the past—that Nock was to turn to after *The Freeman* ceased publication in 1924. First came *Jefferson* (1926), which celebrated the part-time inventor and genteel anarchist while ignoring the President who purchased Louisiana. Then came other worthy books: *The Theory of Education in the United States*, *A Journal of These Days*, *A Journey Into Rabelais's France*. It was with *Our Enemy, the State* (1936) that Nock secured his reputation.

It took some courage on Nock's part to write a tract calling the State "the only professional criminal class" at the height of the New Deal. Franklin Roosevelt was, to Nock, the American Domitian, the man who destroyed the last vestige of independence by the states in his relentless quest to make Washington into a devouring imperial capital. The ordinary citizen, Nock believed, would sheepishly accept the New Deal; a "peculiar moral enervation existed in regard to the State," Nock wrote, creating a silent majority that blithely ignored the judicial empire-building of John Marshall, the "monocratic military despotism" of Lincoln, the foreign imperialism of McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, and the domestic imperialism of Franklin Roosevelt. (In Nock's eyes, only the protests against atrocities in the Spanish-American War of 1898 "marked the last major effort of an impotent and moribund democracy.")

As Western civilization slowly sank beneath the weight of government expansion, Nock saw a way of escape. There were a few people, he believed, who would be willing to free themselves from the constricting bonds of ideology. These people Nock called "the Remnant," people who "have an intellectual curiosity, sometimes touched with emotion, concerning the august order of nature; they are impressed by the contemplation of it, and like to know as much about it as they can."

The goal of the Remnant, Nock explained in a 1936 essay, was to "proceed on our way, first with the more obscure and extremely difficult work of clearing and illuminating our own minds, and second, with what occasional help we may offer to others whose faith, like our own, is set more on the regenerative power than on the uncertain achievements of premature action. . . . Those who have this power are everywhere; everywhere they are not so much resisting as quietly eluding and disregarding all social pressure which tends to mechanize their processes of observation and thought."

Nock was an elitist, but he denied he was a conservative. He refused to join anti-New Deal organizations and in a 1937 essay insisted on his independence from the nascent conservative movement. "When occasion required that I label myself with reference to particular social themes or doctrines, the same decent respect for accuracy led me to describe myself as an anarchist, an individualist, and a single-taxer."

"I see I am now rated as a Tory," he wrote Bernard Iddings Bell in 1933. "We have been called many bad

Landscape

by James Michie

From Théophile Gautier, *"Le Paysage"*

Not a leaf stirs on a limb,
Not one bird sings;
On the red horizon's rim
Twilight's flickerings;

On this side, sparse, small
Bushes, furrows half drowned,
Greyish sections of wall,
Gnarled willows bowed to the ground;

On the other, a field that ends
With a broad, water-logged ditch,
A slow old woman who bends
Heavy-loaded; beyond which

The track, which takes a dip
Into blue hills' inclines,
And unreels, like a long strip
Of ribbon, in loops and twines.

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names, but that takes the prize."

Nock spent the waning years of the 30's recapitulating his earlier themes. There were many essays, none major, as well as *Henry George: An Essay*, a curious tribute to the Victorian single-tax advocate. It was only when a publisher proposed his autobiography that Nock got out of his rut and tried something new. Nock had mulled over an autobiography in the past, but rejected the confessional or gossipy approach: "I have led a singularly uneventful life," he wrote in the preface to the *Memoirs*, "largely solitary, have had little to do with the great of the earth, and no part whatever in their affairs or for that matter, in any other affairs."

For Nock, the robber baron was as much a mass-man as the poor people who were nominally his slaves. For a mass-man to worship an Andrew Carnegie or a Henry Ford was to worship a mirror; the rich were "mass-men, every mother's son of them; unintelligent, ignorant, myopic, incapable of psychical development, but prodigiously sagacious and prehensile."

The *Memoirs* is the most reticent American autobiography since *The Education of Henry Adams*. Nock's family is never mentioned: His friends only exist to provide philosophical nuggets. Even *The Freeman* is never cited by name. The *Memoirs* is, in Nock's words, "the autobiography of a mind in relation to the society in which he found itself."

The Memoirs of a Superfluous Man is the story of an ordered mind in a disordered world, the story of a man who momentarily found Eden and spent the rest of his life trying to regain it.

Eden, for Nock, was at St. Stephen's College, "situated on the blank countryside" of upstate New York. St. Stephen's was paradise, because it taught the permanent things; case-hardened by more than 500 years of testing, St. Stephen's curriculum—Greek, Latin, logic, classical philosophy—allowed Nock to see the world with "a feeling of intense longevity" granted by relentless analysis of the literature of Greece and Rome.

What undermined St. Stephen's, in Nock's eyes, was the dominance of the masses in everyday life. Nock thought America was a country in which everyone was equally free to be equally dull. The mass-man, in Nock's eyes, lived for vicarious violence and invincible ignorance. "The ideals I have seen most seriously and purposefully inculcated (since 1914) are those of the psychopath on the one hand; and on the other, those of the homicidal maniac, the plug-ugly and the thug." (One wonders what Nock would have thought of Sylvester Stallone.)

Nock saw two ideologies competing for the appetites of the masses. The more evil was worship of the State. The State's only purpose, for Nock, was "continually absorbing through taxation more and more of the national wealth." To do this, it dulled the masses by inflating threats posed by overseas menaces. "What best holds people together in pursuance of a common purpose is a spirit of concentrated hate and fear."

The State, through government-run schools, strove to keep the citizens as ignorant as possible. Intelligence was more of a threat to the growth of the State than foreign foes; an intelligent mind knows that the State is not omnipotent and omniscient, and this knowledge is dangerous. "What was the best that the State could find to do with an actual Socrates and an actual Jesus when it had them? Merely to poison the one and crucify the other; for no reason but that they were too embarrassing to be allowed to live any longer."

If the State thrived on dull citizens, capitalists thrived on greedy ones. Nock was a harsh foe of what he called "economism," the belief that the only purpose in life was to acquire and distribute goods. An America where the prime virtue was to "scuffle for riches" was, for Nock, uncivilized, a country "without savour, without depth, *uninteresting*, and withal horrifying."

For Nock, the robber baron was as much a mass-man as the poor people who were nominally his slaves. For a mass-man to worship an Andrew Carnegie or a Henry Ford was to worship a mirror; the rich were "mass-men, every mother's son of them; unintelligent, ignorant, myopic, incapable of psychical development, but prodigiously sagacious and prehensile."

Nock believed in an elite—the Remnant—but he did not feel that the elite in America should control the masses. Lusting for power was a specious reason to live. He believed in a philosophy of "egoistic hedonism," of performing deeds not for the sake of improving others, but for the delight that derives from doing a deed.

Working for the benefit of "society," in Nock's opinion, was not possible. Society does not exist in anything more than "a concourse of very various individuals about which, as a whole, not many statements can be made." An individual cannot "do good" towards an anonymous mass, because "good" is something that can only be transferred from individuals to other individuals. "Society" does not have any organs capable of appreciating worthy deeds.

If "society" remains impervious to individual acts, then a life devoted to political action is not fruitful. Rather than lobbying to change the State, the Remnant should adopt Candide's motto—*Il fait cultiver notre jardin*.

"These few words sum up the whole social responsibility of man," Nock concluded. The "garden" of the mind, nourished through judicious reading and conversations with stimulating friends—this was the only "garden" that counted. To let the mind lie fallow while "prescribing improvement for others . . . to organize something, to institutionalize this-or-that, to pass laws, multiply bureaucratic agencies, form pressure-groups, start revolutions, change forms of government," was the gravest form of self-inflicted damage.

Nock is not entirely pervasive on this point. Good deeds may, in fact, be useful, provided they are given from individuals to other individuals. There is a difference between giving food to a starving neighbor and lobbying against cuts in the food-stamp budget, between helping refugees from Communism adjust to American life and campaigning for Star Wars. It is the difference between living for yourself and living for a cause.

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WHY I AM NOT A 'CONSERVATIVE'

by Steven Goldberg

Like most sociologists, I am conservative in the sense that I believe in the existence of barely perceived social mechanisms—mechanisms that satisfy the deep physiological, psychological, and cultural needs. This sociological world view contains a conservative element: the belief that a sufficiently great attempt to alter society will introduce more unintended, and undesired, consequences than the innovators can anticipate.

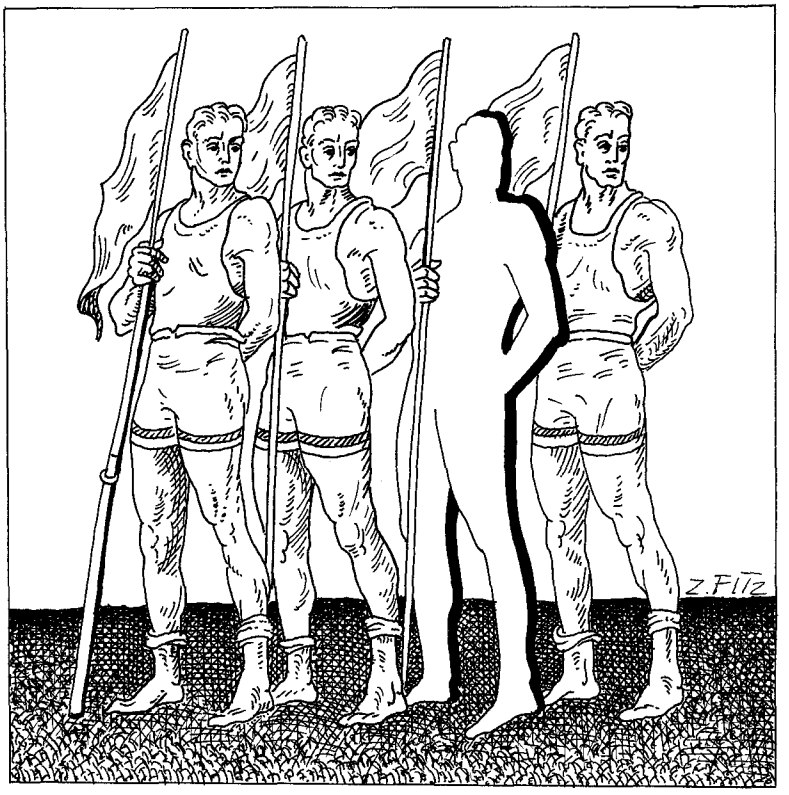
At some level of abstraction, nearly everyone is "conservative" in this sense. Nearly everyone acknowledges the possibility of alterations that, by ignoring realities, invite disaster.

It would be easy, for example, to dismiss the funeral as an atavistic residue of rituals that make sense only for the primitive men who inhabit an apparently random world. It is hardly possible to attend a funeral without hearing someone ridicule the institution as "barbaric." At first glance this does not seem unreasonable: The funeral may indeed cause unnecessary pain, and it might be better to do away with the ritual altogether. However, a little reflection will bring us to the realization that funerals today continue to serve their ancient purpose; they force the bereaved to acknowledge that society has—from his viewpoint—changed dramatically and irreversibly; at the same time, society rallies round the mourner to remind him that he is not alone. The funeral, in other words, is testimony not to the primitive's ignorance but to his understanding.

Now, the beliefs of the political conservative certainly accord with the social conservatism I describe. But so do the beliefs of virtually anyone this side of the pure anarchist. The issue here is the length of the nexus between the social mechanisms and the day-to-day political life that the conservative (or liberal) spends his time addressing. The reactionary may see the introduction of a new traffic light as threatening the very fabric of society, while the radical calls for abolition of all stratification by Tuesday. But the overwhelming majority of observers accept the possibility and desirability of the former and the impossibility and undesirability of the latter.

In general I, as opposed to the political conservative, see the nexus between the social and the political as sufficiently long to render the conservatism of the social view irrelevant to most political realities. This does not require me to reject any specific conservative political position, but it does mean that I am not bound by any belief in the practical relevance of a conservative social view to accept a conservative political position. My acceptance or rejection is not based on the impossibility or dangers inherent in some social alteration but on other considerations. In truth, I often accept the liberal political view, not because I doubt the correctness of the conservative's belief in the dangers of sufficiently great social alteration, but because I do not find that many suggested political changes ignore the barely perceived social realities of which we speak.

I mention all of this not because there is anything interesting about my political beliefs; I don't believe that I have ever made an original or interesting political observation. By the time I finally learn which side is which in one of the world's troubled spots, the issue has become moot. I mention this only because the incorrect belief is widespread (among the 16 people who have ever heard my name) that I



am a political conservative. More interesting, perhaps, is the reason why I am thought to be a political conservative:

I am, and have been by intuition as long as I can remember, an empiricist, a species abhorred by some political conservatives and seen by others as at best only vaguely relevant to anything politically interesting. Without dotting all of the semantic and logical *i*'s and *j*'s, let it suffice here to say that an "empiricist" is one whose interest lies in empirically ascertainable conclusions and in the logic of the explanations. An empiricist, while he may often be impressed by the brilliance of a moral or normative argument, feels in his bones that such an argument is, by its very nature, subjective and that any desired conclusion can be reached by selection of the appropriate (but untestable) moral or normative assumption. The political conservative often labels such an empiricist a "positivist."

I believe that the reason that my empiricism is seen as

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political conservatism is this: In the academy and in the press, a large number of empirical beliefs have been accepted not because they are correct, but because they meet a felt ideological need, and it is to demonstrate the incorrectness of such empirical beliefs that I have devoted much of my career. For example, the belief that capital punishment has been demonstrated to lack deterrent effect, or that stereotypes are untrue, that neuroendocrinological differences between males and females are of little causal importance to male-female behavior—to use just a few examples—are maintained not because they are correct but because they are felt by the adherent to be required by moral or normative imperative.

There is, in fact, no reason why anyone must feel this: Just as an empirical "is" can never generate a moral or normative "ought," so too a moral or normative "ought" is immune (as long as the "ought" is possible) from empirical criticism. So, for example, one who is morally against capital punishment is not in any way required to deny the deterrent effect of the death penalty. He can accept the possibility of the deterrence of the death penalty while rejecting its morality; this is just what he would do if, for example, he were asked his opinion of invoking the death penalty for double parking.

But the liberal, *like me but unlike the political conservative*, accepts the empiricism of the 20th century. He feels in his bones that the ultimately subjective nature of the moral or normative position that makes it immune to attack also renders it incapable of persuading anyone who does not already accept its assumptions. Where the political conservative rests easy with the admission that a moral position is ultimately rooted in a value, the liberal, seeing a value as subjective and therefore argumentatively worthless, accepts the most dubious empirical belief if it camouflages the basically subjective nature of his (and all) moral and normative beliefs. One might look upon this liberal tendency favorably and see it as choosing the good over the true, or he may look at it unfavorably as choosing to lie in support of an arrogant assumption of infallibility. From an empiricist point of view, the two are the same.

I used to believe that the conservative discovery of my empiricism would cause conservatives to be understandably dubious about my work. In fact, the conservative discovery of my empiricist assumption has not led to any rejection of my logical or empirical work. It seems that conservatism has had to endure empiricists for so long now that it expects empiricism from all non-conservative writers. Conservatives simply ignore this and accept as an unexpected gift the refutations that demonstrate the inadequacy of liberal empirical arguments.

The liberal's faith in empiricism may not be the entire explanation of their willingness to invoke fallacious empirical arguments. For the 40 years preceeding this decade (and to the present, though less strongly), the universities and the national media have been far more liberal than conservative. The liberal willingness to accept terrible empirical arguments to support liberal values may be owing not so much to empiricism as the inevitable intellectual flaccidization that comes with being in power too long. If this is correct, we may expect increasing numbers of fallacious conservative empirical arguments (reflecting the conservative rise to political power in the 80's). If, on the other hand, my original explanation is correct, then we would not expect power to intellectually corrupt conservatives to the extent it has already corrupted the liberals.

Cultural Conservation

(continued from page 8)

been the first, and after him came Dryden, Addison, Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold, and T.S. Eliot. The American side is heavily weighted towards philosophical essayists—Emerson, Babbitt, Trilling, and Kirk himself. These men turned prophet only after they had established their credentials as leading writers. They threw down the gauntlet to barbarism and bad taste only after they had demonstrated their own right to represent this civilization. Arnold's pronouncements on culture are sometimes unendurably priggish, but he had earned his spurs both as a poet and as a critic long before he assumed the prophetic mantle.

One is forced to observe that few contemporary claimants for the job of Elijah or Sam Johnson have ever produced a sonnet or short story—not, at least, one that has come to our attention. They might reply that as the French Revolution had no need of scientists, a populist mass movement has no need of poets and essayists. Unfortunately, there is no such mass movement: There is only a mailing list. And if there were a resurgent populism of the Wallace type, its members would have little patience with manifestos on values. At this point, only Jesse Jackson knows how to work a crowd with diatribes against bankers, New York City, and big business. Jackson knows very well that the true populist—for all his settled virtues—is a radical consumed with envious rage against his superiors. Given half a chance, a good populist movement would tear down both the liberal managerial state and the new conservative "counter-establishment." Populists are the material out of which revolutions, not restorations, are made.

Anyone who sets out to restore civilization in the United States will have to begin recruiting a few poets, novelists, and musicians as a first step. So far, the conservative movement is overloaded with economists and political analysts. Wherever we turn on the right—old, new, or neo—there is no sign of an Eliot on the horizon. Ray Bradbury, perhaps, comes closest as a writer who fires the reactionary imagination, and it is to Russell Kirk's credit that he unmasked the conservative Bradbury. Until the projectors can succeed in recruiting more serious thinkers (and better writers), cultural conservatism will remain what it is at this point: a highly advertised parade that consists of a piccolo player and a few floats. We are still waiting for the elephants.

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Past and Present *by Samuel T. Francis*

"The handwriting on the wall may be a forgery."
—Ralph Hodgson

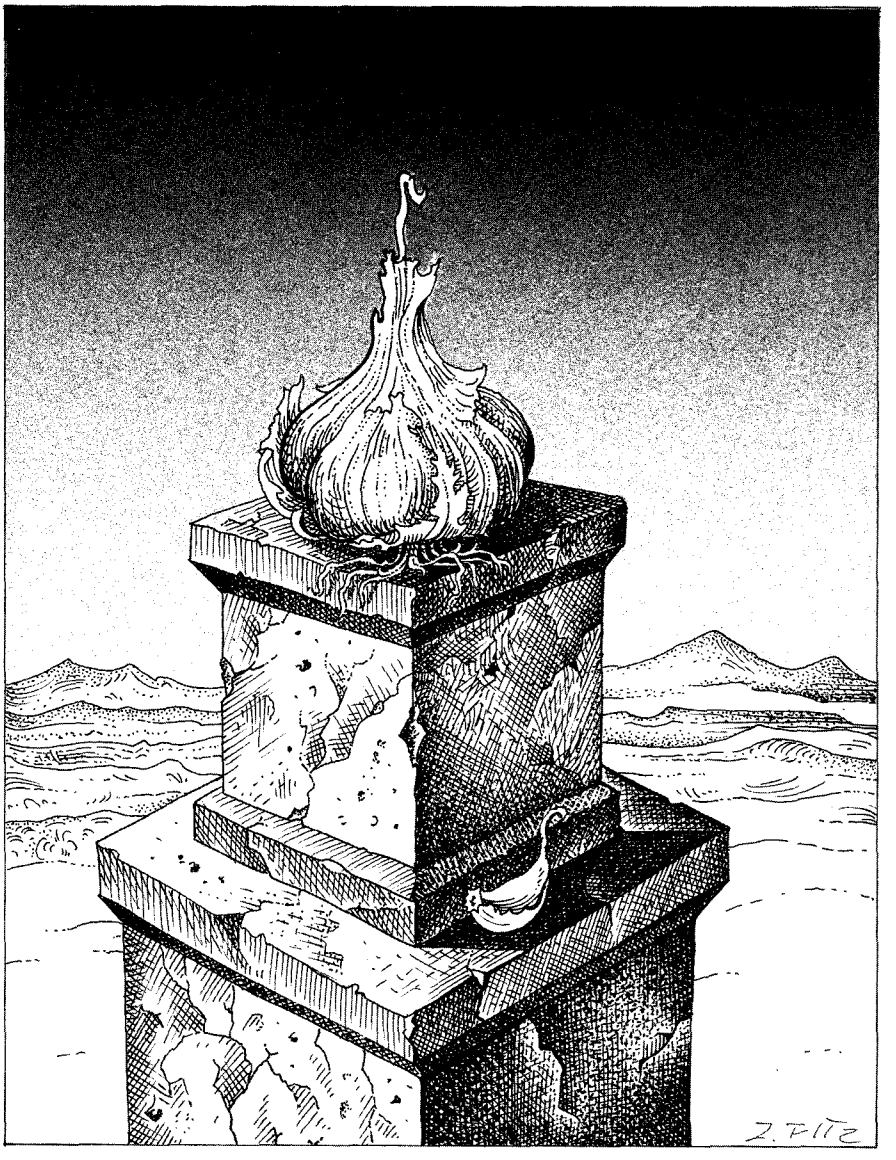
Conservatism: Dream and Reality by Robert Nisbet, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

The Search for Historical Meaning: Hegel and the Postwar American Right by Paul E. Gottfried, DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press.

A steady flow of scholarly works on the intellectual roots of modern conservatism has appeared since the 1950's. Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* was and remains the best and the best-known of such books, but similar studies by Peter Viereck, Clinton Rossiter, and others are also well-known and useful. Robert Nisbet's *Conservatism: Dream and Reality* and Paul Gottfried's *The Search for Historical Meaning* will undoubtedly take their proper place as classics within the genre.

Those who have read Nisbet's earlier work, especially his *The Quest for Community* and *The Sociological Tradition*, will find familiar themes in his short essay. It is Nisbet's lifelong argument that the principal concepts of sociology are also the main ideas of classical conservatism and that both originated as reactions to the Industrial and Democratic Revolutions. Although Nisbet has frequently pointed to the parallels before, he has now explored its specifically conservative dimensions for the first time.

Rejecting the contractarian, natural rights, and individualistic doctrines of the Enlightenment, conservative prophets such as Burke, de Maistre, Bonald, and Hegel viewed man as a creature of society and the traditions, authorities, and institutions that compose it. "Society," in their view, writes Nisbet, "is not a mechanical thing, not a machine the parts of which are both interchangeable and individually separable. It is organic in its articulation of institutions and interrelationship of functions; also in its necessarily, irreversibly cumulative development over time." Reform, innovation, revolution, liberation, progress,



Samuel T. Francis was a legislative assistant to the late Senator John P. East of North Carolina and is currently an editorial writer for the Washington Times *and the author of* Power and History: The Political Thought of James Burnham.

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and all the other shibboleths of liberalism are predicated on the illusion of man as an autonomous being capable of isolating himself from society and its past and of reshaping social arrangements to suit his "rights," his preferences, and his fantasies.

Nisbet's work on the conservative roots and meaning of sociology has been one of the most important intellectual achievements of our time, for it has helped to move American "conservatism" away from its infantile libertarian drift toward a truer and more serious vision of American society as a functional counterpart to the European societies that early conservatives defended. If the superficial view—that the absence in America of monarchy, aristocracy, and feudalism renders Burke and his ideas irrelevant—is now being rejected, we owe to Nisbet a more profound understanding of how conservative ideas of tradition and authority were formed and how they apply to our own national and cultural experience.

Despite our great debt, some problems arise from any historicism that is taken in isolation from other currents of thought. To Nisbet, and to many of the conservative thinkers he discusses, there is no transhistorical core to human nature by which historical change may be measured. There is, to be sure, an inheritance received from the past that is organic and functional, from which men receive their moral beliefs and character, and change may be judged by the degree to which it conforms to or departs from this inheritance. Once a destabilization occurs, however, it is not at all clear to what extent Nisbet's conservatism allows for its correction. Innovation, whatever its damage, is simply incorporated into the continuing flow of history and eventually is assimilated into a new stable arrangement. "History for the conservative," Nisbet writes,

> has been very much the kind of force that natural selection is for the biological evolutionist. No individual has ever lived, nor could possibly be, says the evolutionist, with the powers of decision which could bring into being the species. It is the operation of processes of selection through chance, through historical trial and error, which alone makes possible the biological world. There is ingrained in evolutionary selection a wisdom astronomically superior to any wisdom imagined in a man. Efforts of breeders to do more than work *with* these natural processes of change and development are manifestly farcical.

A purely historicist conservatism shares one weakness with all evolutionary theory: It does not appear to allow for any standard outside of history, and it threatens to collapse into an environmentalist and relativist theory that views human beings as the malleable artifacts of their social and historical surroundings. It permits neither a reactionary nor a restorationist tactic, much less a revolutionary effort. Like Old Man River, a given social order just keeps rollin' along, and whatever obstacles to the flow it encounters are soon rolling along with it.

What do conservatives do when their society becomes fragmented and loses continuity with the past, when its leadership and many of its citizens cease to believe in or understand the central moral standards that have defined it, or when legitimate authorities and institutions are usurped by forces that seek the subversion of the social and political fabric? Nisbet rejects the restorationist strategy proposed by the Moral Majority and similar New Right groups preoccupied with issues of public morality:

> From the traditional conservative's point of view it is fatuous to use the family—as the evangelical crusaders regularly do—as the justification for their tireless crusades to ban abortion categorically, to bring the Department of Justice in on every Baby Doe, to mandate by constitution the imposition of "voluntary" prayers in the public schools, and so on. From Burke on it has been a conservative precept and a sociological principle since Auguste Comte that the surest way of weakening the family, or any vital social group, is for the government to assume, and then monopolize, the family's historic function.

Nisbet is quite correct on the absurdity of using the government to restore the family, and the "crusaders" have their share of flaws—narrow-mindedness, zealotry, no small amount of dishonesty, and considerable incompetence. However, what the adherents of the New Right understood is that the central moral standards by which American society has always lived and which they took to be absolutely, transhistorically true, are endangered by the legalization and popularization of abortion and infanticide and by the usurpation of legitimate political and educational authority by a militant secularism. What made them interesting was an apparent willingness to use political power as a bulwark against further erosion and subversion.

Their effort may well be futile or misguided; the standard itself may even be obsolescent or false; but it is because they adhere to some such standard that they are able to offer resistance to the "astronomically superior wisdom" that would otherwise lead them and their historical order to extinction. One would rather spend eternity (or an afternoon, for that matter) in the company of Robert Nisbet, but the reactionary populists of the New Right have a legitimate and important place in American politics.

Nisbet's school of conservatism and his functionalist defense of tradition and authority are valuable both in themselves and for the defense of institutions that are still intact, but pure historicism—and it is not clear how far Nisbet himself is willing to go—is of limited value in a society faced with vast historical discontinuities and a radicalized, alienated elite committed to transforming the society. Read in conjunction with Nisbet, Paul Gottfried's new monograph will serve to broaden our perspective on the philosophical legacy of classical conservatism.

It is Gottfried's thesis that several of the major figures of the American conservative intellectual movement since World War II were significantly influenced by G.W.F. Hegel. He specifically examines the thought of Will Herberg and Eric Voegelin, Karl Witt-

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fogel, James Burnham, Reinhold Niebuhr, Stefan Possony, Thomas Molnar, and Frank Meyer. Most of these thinkers, Gottfried argues, assimilated Hegelian elements through their formal education in Europe or indirectly through exposure to the Hegelian elements of Marxism during their involvement as Communists. Hegelian themes emerge in their writings despite their frequent and explicit polemics against Hegelianism.

The genius of Gottfried's work is that he transmutes what at first appears to be an obscure or even trivial expedition in intellectual archaeology into a major contribution to contemporary conservative thought, one that seeks to resolve the dilemma between the relativist implications of historicism and the radical thrust of metaphysical absolutism. "Historicists," writes Gottfried,

> and among them Hegel, have sometimes treated moral and intellectual truths as being relative to particular epochs and cultures and thus fated to vanish in a changing world. Yet, this exaggerated emphasis on historical change does not represent the whole of historicist thinking. Many historicists, including Hegel, have stressed historical continuity more than change. They have also presented history as a vehicle for teaching and testing values without ascribing the origin of morality to a changing historical process.

Gottfried's defense of this proposition, of a "value-centered" or ethical historicism, in contrast to the relativism conventionally associated with historicism, offers a response both to historicists as well as to the antihistorical universalism of the Straussian school and "the largely hand-to-mouth political philosophy devised by the neoconservatives."

Particularly severe on Strauss and his disciples for their critique of historicism, Gottfried accuses them of an antihistorical philistinism that "blur[s] distinctions between their own *modern* values and the values of earlier generations." At the same time, he points to the historicist conservative thought of such scholars as Claes Ryn, who "have tried to clarify how 'the transcendent moral order becomes historically immanent and is experienced by man in particular good actions.'"

The relevance of Gottfried's work lies in more than its importance to the fundamental philosophical problems of the contemporary right, for he argues in his final chapter that the abandonment of historical and traditionalist thought by much of the American right in recent years in "the total secularization of the conservative modernist outlook," in pragmatic political movements, policy activism, preoccupation with antihistorical Lockean "rights," "democratic capitalism," and democratist globalism has resulted in the derailment of serious conservatism and the alienation of conservatives from the particular traditions of their own historical order. Although strongly critical of the paganism of Alain de Benoist for its anti-American, pro-Soviet, anti-Christian, and anti-Judaic content, Gottfried praises Benoist for seriously considering "what may be today the chief obstacle to historical conservatism: the disappearance or continuing radicalization of those cultural and social institutions whose growth and survival conservatives in the past contemplated with pride."

Gottfried concludes his study of American conservatism on a cautiously pessimistic note, a refreshing contrast to the bubbly optimism of Newt Gingrich and other Howdy Doodies of the "conservative renaissance." Although the intellectual resources exist for a historical conservatism—"a philosophy of order based on historically validated traditions that are made to endure amid change"—the cultural ground for its political efflorescence are weak, as "the American social order becomes increasingly identified with postmodern tendencies—for example, feminism, secularism, and governmentally mandated equality." "The passing of the historicist tradition

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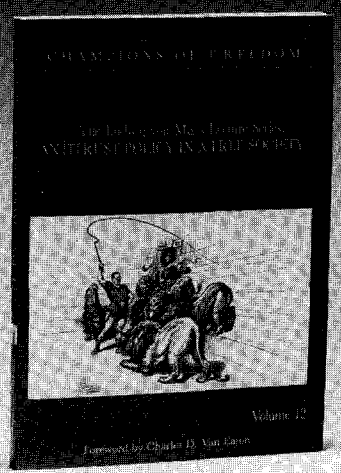

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of thinking from the postwar conservative movement," Gottfried concludes,

> has left a theoretical void that may eventually embarrass American conservatives. The intellectual Right has generally grown cold to the study of history, except as a means of assailing the far Left's revisionism. Having by now largely lost a shared vision of the past, conservatives may soon find themselves without any vision except that of dehistoricized persons who seek to enrich themselves and the gross national product through the tireless pursuit of self-interest.

In pointing to Hegel as a major source of conservative thought, Paul Gottfried has supplemented Nisbet's more purely historicist emphasis and pointed to enduring standards by which historical flux may be evaluated. Both books offer an expansion of the contemporary conservative mind.

Unraveling the Remnant *by John C. Chalberg*

"Whatever the road to power, that is the road which will be trod."

—Edmund Burke

The Rise of the Counter-Establishment: From Conservative Ideology to Political Power **by Sidney Blumenthal, New York: Times Books; $19.95.**

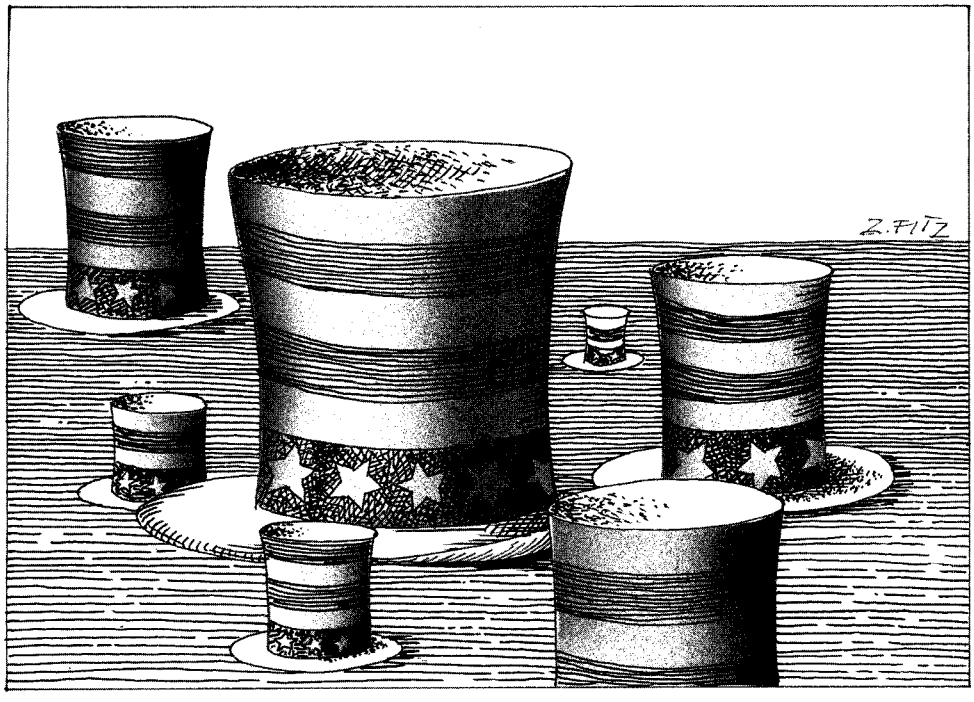
For years, or at least for that stretch of time between the heady days of Theodore Roosevelt and the hapless days of Jimmy Carter, something called the Eastern establishment benevolently ruled over America. For years, or at least between the demon days of Franklin Roosevelt and the dog days of Jimmy Carter, this behemoth pulled the country's strings, but never its own punches. If Americans wanted only to be left alone, the liberal establishment was there to plot them into unnecessary wars. If Americans wished to explain away any and all grievances, that same establishment was there to be conveniently whipped.

It was only a matter of time before there was something called a conservative counterestablishment. Enter Sidney Blumenthal. A card-carrying member of an embattled, almost endangered species, Blumenthal set out a few years ago to push what's left of the liberal establishment further leftward. In the face of the Reagan revolution he has tried to counter the counterestablishment from the pages of three publications. Starting out with the socialist *In These Times*, he moved upward to *The* (Cautiously Liberal) *New Republic* before finally establishing himself at the *Washington Post*.

For years, Blumenthal notes, conservatives skewered their New Class enemies, meaning liberals, intellectuals, bureaucrats, and other equally unproductive leeches on the body politic. But on the night of Ronald Reagan's first inauguration, it would be the "ideological spoilsmen" of the right who applauded their new President before they "dispersed into the Washington night and showed up at their New Class jobs the next morning."

Where did they come from? Sidney Blumenthal has written an entire book to answer this very question. Barely 25 years ago conservatism in America was little more than a "remnant." Huddling around *National Review* were ex-Communists, free marketeers, and Burkean traditionalists whom William F. Buckley sought to mold into a unified movement. Fusion was the Buckley goal, but a shaky truce was the best that he could manage.

With the defeat of Barry Goldwater, conservatives woke up to the realization that ideological assertion could not be automatically converted into electoral victories—which explains the emphasis on grass roots politics. With the election of Richard Nixon, conservatives awakened again to a new



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realization, namely that their drive for both the White House and ideological consensus had failed to produce enough ideologically pure bodies to staff the new administration—which explains the proliferation of conservative think tanks during the 1970's.

With President Richard Nixon, conservatives quickly grew disenchanted—hence the wildly unsuccessful Ashbrook candidacy in 1972. With Nixon's departure they began to look beyond the Ford interregnum. Hence the narrowly unsuccessful Reagan candidacy in 1976.

Blumenthal is not interested in rehashing electoral politics from Nixon to Reagan. He is no left-of-liberal Teddy White chronicler of the making and unmaking of recent American Presidents. What he is deeply interested in is the recent stitching together of conservative remnants to create the complex quilt that is the Reagan phenomenon. The result is a book that is part intellectual history, part institutional history, part biography, and part gossip. We learn what Milton Friedman thinks, how the American Enterprise Institute was built, when Jude Wanniski discovered conservatism, and why Norman Podhoretz really turned against George McGovern.

Whatever his genre, Blumenthal is out to make one simple point: Counterestablishment conservatism is essentially un-American. Apparently suffering for years under the burden of conservative attacks on the patriotism of the left, Blumenthal is out to turn the tables. He begins by positing a peaceful America inhabited almost exclusively by pragmatic liberals. These liberals were too busy solving America's problems ever to notice the intruder in their garden.

Lurking somewhere in the wilderness were "shadow liberals" who were uncomfortable in the role of peaceful cultivators: They were "devoted to ideology, not tradition." Their self-appointed charge was to destroy, not build. Here Blumenthal concedes his subjects a bit of old-fashioned Americanism. Theirs has been "an American story of self-invention." These were conservatives who had no past to restore, so they created an identity out of a hodge-podge of European ideas. Their founding father was Adam Smith, who regarded 18th-century British mercantilism as a mistake. Their Austrian uncle was Friedrich von Hayek, a "fossil" who looked upon the entire 20th century "as a mistake."

Not only were these nascent counterestablishmentarians shadowy un-Americans, but they were also openly un-Republican. Ronald Reagan, according to Blumenthal, didn't bother to reinvent the Grand Old Party; he simply "transcended" it. The party of Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt (and big government) became a haven for conservative ideologues. The party of Harding and Coolidge (and Kellogg-Briand Pacts) became a network of Cold Warriors.

Borrowing from the "remnant" saved and displayed by William F. Buckley, these new conservatives of the 1980's have clothed themselves in the armor of Old Right Warriors like Whittaker Chambers. Chambers joined the Communist Party because he believed it to be the wave of the future; and he left the party "still believing in the inevitability of world communism." Russell Kirk is another. Kirk was so "militantly anti-modern" that he attacked the essence of America: the automobile and the Chamber of Commerce business culture. Even Buckley himself cannot pass the Blumenthal loyalty test, because he has expressed cautious doubts about universal suffrage.

From the fringe of the remnant, Blumenthal proceeds to unravel the many-layered garment which, he is convinced, conceals the subversive motives of the counterestablishment. Whether sun-belt businessmen or Jewish intellectuals, all share the outsider label. If they are truly American, it is only because they have divined Norman Podhoretz's "dirty little secret." They wanted to make it; and they figured out how to do so. What could be more American than that? Russell Kirk may be content to climb the circular staircase in his Gothic house, but more modern conservatives prefer to climb the ladder of American success.

Shameless self-promoters, they have written the right books at the right moment. They have made the right marriages and moved into the right neighborhoods. Witness the meteoric rise of an obscure economist named Arthur Laffer. A "cipher" within the Nixon administration, a sensitive "physical absurdity" (Blumenthal seldom resists an occasion for a personal remark), Laffer left the government and discovered the wonders of walking on the supply side.

By the late 1970's he had lost weight and found southern California. Soon he would be mingling socially with Reagan's "Millionaire Backers." Eventually Nancy and Ron would be spending evenings at the Laffers, complete with a "squirming weasel" tossed into Nancy's lap by a Laffer offspring. Despite that surprise, the Reagans returned. "I had a lot of 'ins' in that group," Laffer conceded. "He was always the well-connected Reaganite," Blumenthal concludes.

Blumenthal has little time for traditional Republican politicians. They are almost irrelevant to his story. In fact, Blumenthal posits a teeter-totter theory of modern politics: As parties decline, ideologies rise. In this age of 30-second political ads and photogenic candidates, parties have become shells of their former selves. Into these suddenly empty shells have jumped politicized ideologues. But why are there so many more conservative players in this particular shell game? And if America really is a nation of pragmatists, and the Republican Party really has become a haven for ideologues, why is it the national Democratic Party that is in such a sorry fix?

At this point Blumenthal can only trot out Ronald Reagan, the all-purpose answer-man, as in "conservatism would never have become a mass cultural experience without him." If Reagan has done nothing else in his lengthy political career, he has at least provided a convenient excuse for liberalism's failures.

Reagan's long-running role during the 1980's has been to convert conservative ideology into national mythology. The Great Communicator is, according to Blumenthal, the Great Mythmaker, who believes that once upon a time Americans were pure and innocent, not to mention individually motivated and individually successful. Unlike some of his conservative brethren, Reagan has no interest in restoring the Age of Feudalism or the England of Edmund Burke. Blumenthal's bet is that the President would settle for 19th-century Ameri-

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ca. Why? Because Blumenthal's Reagan is at heart a Social Darwinist, albeit a Social Darwinist with a human face. He champions not the self-made man, who would work his way to individual greatness by crushing those who would stand in his way, but the self-indulgent man, who would spend his way to societal prosperity by buying from those who would stand in his way.

Historically, the GOP, with its roots deeply embedded in the 19th century, has been the party of businessmen, Lincoln reformers, and professional pols. Now, it has been captured by a devious counterestablishment, which exists apart from the Republican Party and outside of American history. But Blumenthal has discovered a ray of hope for traditional Republicans (and all Americans): There has been no realignment of political parties, only a realignment of politicized elites.

But can the shift of Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, and Jeane Kirkpatrick from the Democratic to the Republican Parties account for the Reagan revolution? Of course not. Can even the coming of age of an entire generation of youngish conservative intellectuals explain the results of the 1980 and 1984 elections? Of course not. The rise to power of a conservative President and conservative ideas is an important story, but it is far from the whole story.

Ronald Reagan was swept to power by middle- and lower-middle-class voters who were tired of embarrassing setbacks abroad, beset by challenges to traditional values at home, and anxious for an American economic revival. Many of these Reagan votes were cast by former Democrats; but, as Kevin Phillips has pointed out in *Post-Conservative America,* the 1980's have produced neither a party nor an elite realignment but a "dealignment" away from the two major parties.

According to a Gallup poll, Reagan in 1980 drew only 86 percent of the traditional Republican vote, which was the lowest of any party nominee since Goldwater's 80 percent in 1964. Phillips does note that Reagan's share of the vote was 12 points higher than that of Goldwater, but only two points greater than Gerald Ford's showing in 1976. Such figures are not the stuff of historic party realignments.

Furthermore, no previous party realignment produced a split Congress or occurred during a period of declining voter turnout. Writing before the 1984 Reagan landslide, Phillips makes a still persuasive case that the Reagan Presidency may be only a stepping-stone to a more populist-oriented conservatism. The allegiance of those first-time Republican voters is tenuous at best. Their votes were conditional votes. A more permanent attachment to the Republican Party would require a revitalized American presence in the world, a growing American economy, and/or the enactment of the New Right's social agenda. The current Iran-Contra fiasco threatens the first; the jury is still very much out on the second; and Reagan has so far failed on the third. Such debacles, doubts, and defeats are not the stuff of permanent party realignments.

If such a realignment should occur in the 1990's, it is not likely to be achieved because of Republican adherence to the Laffer curve or Friedman-inspired monetarism. Nor will it result from a rush among the middle and lower-middle classes to devour the latest George Gilder treatise or add to their collection of *Firing Line* videotapes. Party realignment will not come courtesy of a genial White House host but in response to a major crisis or the passion of a majoritarian leader.

G.K. Chesterton once observed that in America the most democratic man may also be the most despotic man. When he wrote those words he was thinking of Andrew Jackson—a man of passion, who identified himself with ordinary people, a President who rode to power on the wings of the first major party realignment in American history.

There are many superficial similarities between Jackson and Reagan. Both were frustrated in their initial attempts to capture the White House. Both eventually won larger mandates for their second terms. Both held office as old men. Both preached minimalist government. Both rode out of the West to storm the Washington establishment. Both attacked corrupt and lethargic special interests. Here, however, the parallel ends.

Before reaching the White House, Jackson was a genuine American hero who suffered often and always demanded much of himself. Reagan, on the other hand, was a genuine American celebrity who, once he discovered Hollywood, seldom demanded much of himself. And now, having attained the White House, he has failed to demand very much of his countrymen.

Perhaps the 1990's will be different. Perhaps there will then be a party realignment to match the elite realignment that Blumenthal outlined. If so, the current counterestablishment will be as irrelevant as books which attempted to dissect it. If Kevin Phillips is right, a "post-conservative America" will have little use for the conservative intellectuals Sidney Blumenthal finds so fascinating—and so infuriating.

The game plan of these conservatives, according to Blumenthal, is to "transcend time" by ushering in a permanent economic recovery shielded by an eternally vigilant Strategic Defense Initiative. Blumenthal thinks that the odds are poor for the ultimate success of either goal. Phillips seems to agree with the former, and he wrote his book before the unveiling of the latter. However, they disagree when it comes to predicting what will follow the Age of Reagan. Blumenthal comforts himself with the thought that American conservatives will 'umbly retire to their more convincing role as "shadow liberals." Anti-government nay-saying, so long as it is done from the political sidelines, is Sidney Blumenthal's idea of a safe and sane American conservatism.

Perhaps Mr. Blumenthal will be proved right. Perhaps by the 1990's Americans will have awakened to the morning after Reagan. Perhaps by then Americans of all political persuasions will have rediscovered the reassuring joy of either hugging or whipping a newly risen—and oddly comfortable—liberal establishment.

Don't bet on it. The liberal establishment is not likely to be restored. And the counterestablishment? Is it likely to survive? Well it might, but should it not, the 1980's could portend a dealignment of elites to match Kevin Phillips' dealignment of parties. And if Mr. Phillips proves to be the better prognosticator, the Sidney Blumenthals of the 1990's will be singing a very different political tune.

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Old Babbitts Die Hard *by Wilfred M. McClay*

"Believe me, it's the fellow with four to ten thousand a year, say, and an automobile and a nice little family in a bungalow on the edge of town, that makes the wheels of progress go round."

—George F. Babbitt

Ford: The Men and the Machine by Robert Lacey, Boston: Little, Brown; $24.95.

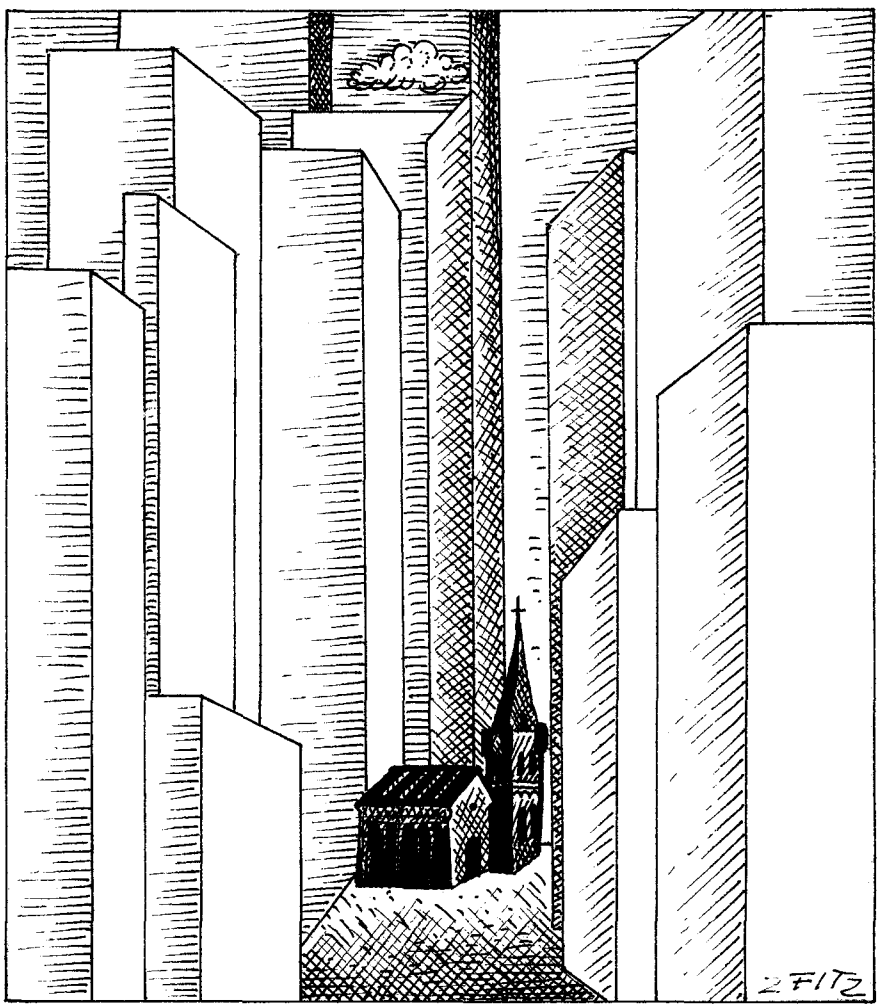
The most prominent buildings of a civilization speak eloquently of what it esteems. The great medieval cathedrals of France rose in splendor over their Gothic towns, and the upward pull of their inner space offered otherworldly consolation to the souls around them. Some 200 years ago, a foreign traveler arriving in one of the coastal cities of English-speaking America would have been awed by the profusion of church steeples towering over the skyline. Today, the seaborne visitor to Manhattan Island will find himself arrested by a very different vision, of concrete or steel-and-glass behemoths that dwarf all human scale, swallowing up such once-imposing ecclesiastical edifices as Trinity in Wall Street or St. Patrick's in midtown.

In nearly every American city, the physiognomy is much the same. The business skyscraper dominates the urban vision. Of course, such buildings tell us even more of the special place that business holds in our civilization. More specifically, the evolution of skyscrapers—from the nuanced structures of Louis Sullivan to the unabashed virility of the Empire State Building to the glass towers and mirror-skinned hotels that now dominate the American downtown—embodies the changes in the nature of American business. The more recent styles of business architecture perfectly express the bureaucratic and impersonal imperatives of contemporary business. Form follows function in more ways than one.

A people so singlemindedly devoted to commerce as Americans ought to have yearned for a literature that reflected upon the nature of that devotion. If the business of America is business, then the American novelist ought to be willing to depict the stage upon which so much of the drama of our people and our time is set. Such a literature, however, has not been forthcoming. The single most celebrated American novel about a businessman, Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt*, while it fails to meet the need, does touch upon the ambivalence American intellectuals have always felt about the American ideal of worldly success. "The exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess SUCCESS," William James lamented, "is our national disease"; and the burgeoning skyline of contemporary Manhattan would seem to bear him out.

The rise of the political right in the 1980's should present an opportunity to correct our misunderstanding of the business world. Although journalists have probably overinterpreted the phenomenon, there can be no doubt that lucrative business careers have a renewed allure, particularly among younger Americans.

George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* and Peters' and Watermans' *In Search of Excellence* reflect our revived admiration for the entrepreneur, the rugged individual who cuts through the red tape and turns ideas into reality. The image of heroic entrepreneur fuses the romantic artist with the captain of industry; a great entrepreneur can be at



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once as sensible as a banker and as visionary as a mystic—a quintessential American hero.

The entrepreneur has proved to have considerable appeal for the liberals who bait the bureaucracy in Charles Peters' *Washington Monthly*. Even PBS is getting into the act with a television series, *The Entrepreneurs*, aired this spring. Surely the astounding popularity of Lee Iacocca's autobiography owes much more to that erstwhile Ford salesman's ability to project a hardworking, scrappy, entrepreneurial image than to any of his concrete achievements. No doubt, this image helps account for the persistent suggestions that Iacocca would make a creditable Presidential candidate.

Ford was very far from being the simple man of American folklore.

It is not the first time in this century, though, that a prominent automotive executive has been put forward for the Presidency. As Robert Lacey reminds us in his splendid book *Ford: The Men and the Machine*, that honor belongs to Henry Ford, himself, perhaps the greatest of all American entrepreneurs. The glimpse Lacey's book affords into the strange life and mind of this entrepreneurial exemplar, as well as into the tangled psychological legacy he bequeathed to his offspring, may impart a more somber hue to our image of the buccaneering business-adventurer.

Although he was a man of demonic energy, with a kind of rough and unreflective integrity about him, Ford was very far from being the simple man of American folklore. Indeed, the words *paradox* and *irony*—not to mention *inconsistency*—are likely to recur in any discussion of Ford's life and work. He was a man able to look both forward and backward, often exhibiting both traits at the same time. Such a fusion of futurism and nostalgia was characteristic of many Americans who came of age during the Progressive era; one can find a similar pattern in such different men as Frank Lloyd Wright, Woodrow Wilson, John Dewey, and Charles Ives. Ford was merely the most extreme example of such split-mindedness. Although he had the prejudices of an agrarian populist, complete with anti-Semitism and hostility to bankers, Ford was one of the most powerful of American industrialists, pioneering not only the assembly line but also something called "human engineering"—an intrusive and coercive form of labor control. He repeatedly affirmed the solid and middle-American moral teaching of the McGuffey Readers but also kept a mistress directly under his wife's nose and delighted in the cruel and repeated public abasement of his son and heir apparent, Edsel. He is famous for his injunctions about the uselessness of history but was obsessed with his own history, and, as Lacey shows, he loved to tinker with machinery. Ford hated farming but, in the best Jeffersonian fashion, idealized the virtues of country life; indeed, he spoke of his greatest achievement, the universally affordable Model T, as a means by which a man could "enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces."

Here is where the ironies of Henry Ford begin to extend beyond personal idiosyncracy and begin to take on cultural significance. Ford was the most powerful force behind the automobilization of America, yet he had no intimation of the effects of this technology on "God's great open spaces." Once he had become wildly successful and unimaginably wealthy, Ford plunged into what became the overriding passion of his later life: historical restoration. The irony in this development could hardly have been greater. It was as if Ford were trying to compensate for the forces he had unleashed, trying to preserve, in such projects as Greenfield Village, "the slow-paced, candlelit America," which writes Lacey, "he, more than anyone, did so much to destroy." Yet there is little evidence that Ford had anything like compensation in mind.

As Lacey's account of Ford suggests, the entrepreneur is not always able to sustain his efforts effectively. For, the same single–mindedness that fires his creative imagination can as easily blind him to realities. Henry Ford is a case in point. Although his determination to provide "a motor car for the great multitude" was fabulously successful, that success was shorter-lived than is commonly realized. Sales of the Model T slipped steadily during the prosperous mid-1920's, as the Tin Lizzie became old hat and the public flocked instead to buy the more graceful and fashionable Chevrolets, manufactured at Alfred P. Sloan's General Motors (and marketed on the installment plan). Hardheaded Henry Ford could not believe that public dissatisfaction with his pet invention was responsible for the declining sales figures. He refused to listen to the sound advice of his son Edsel, that the Model T had to be replaced. Such obstinacy is not unusual among entrepreneurial pioneers, and it had unfortunate results. Thanks to Henry's insistence upon running the company with the same personal oversight that he had exercised in the beginning, by 1930 the Ford Motor Company lost its primacy in the industry to GM.

The Ford family's personal control, then, would have much to do with their company's erratic performance over the years. General Motors, on the other hand, had devised a modern management structure—a bureaucracy based upon systematic research, rational planning, and a well-defined chain of command—which left the chaotic, haphazard, and individualistic management style of Ford floundering in its wake. Only as Ford Motor Company began adopting similar methods—not wholly implemented until the retirement of Henry Ford II and the installment of Philip Caldwell as the first non-Ford-family chairman—was it able to keep pace.

So much, then, for the staying power of some entrepreneurs. For better or worse, their characters and contributions have not, in the final analysis, determined the fate of modern business. It was not in Henry Ford's fragmented and solitary life, as he shuttled daily between his gargantuan Rouge River plant and his ever-mounting collections of antiquities, that the future lay. Instead, it lay behind the walls of General Motors' offices on Grand Boulevard, the world's largest office building in its day, where GM devised and perfected the methods of modern management. Yet, our understanding of what goes on behind such walls, and particularly in the hearts and minds of those who labor within them, still languishes in obscurity.

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Fine China *by Jonathan Chaves*

"In this age of decadence people love antiques and willingly submit to deception."
—Cheng Hsieh, 18th-century Chinese poet and painter

The Burning Forest: Essays on Chinese Culture and Politics **by Simon Leys, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.**

Anyone who fondly supposes that the Chinese Communists are the "good" Communists should read this exciting, powerful book by the Belgian sinologist Pierre Ryckmans, writing under his *nom de plume*, Simon Leys. As far back as 1974, Leys's book *Chinese Shadows* (originally published in French; translated into English in 1977) was the first by a Western sinologist to tell the truth about the "Cultural Revolution": that it represented a chaotic explosion of totalitarianism run amuck, undermining virtually all Chinese values, both moral and aesthetic. It took immense courage for Leys to issue his passionate yet elegant *cri de coeur*. Why? Because most other sinologists and "China Watchers" were then engaged in the same self-delusory intoxication with the Great Idea that had entrapped so many intellectuals decades earlier with regard to the Soviet Union. I personally know scholars in the China field who would stop talking to a colleague who said anything kind about *Chinese Shadows*.

But surely, one would think, now that the CCP itself has admitted that horrors were perpetrated during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the way has been cleared for the "China Experts" to step forward and openly acknowledge that they were wrong. Actually, only those unfamiliar with the writings of Solzhenitsyn, Paul Hollander, Raymond Aron, or Jean François Revel will be surprised to learn that nothing could be further from the case. Of course the Experts echo the party line by bemoaning the Cultural Revolution as an unfortunate aberration, but never do they apologize for misleading their public, let alone think through the rather obvious implications of the period now known as the "Ten Years Holocaust" in Chinese: namely, that the ideas which had the Cultural Revolution as their inevitable consequence were those of Marx, Lenin, and Mao.

And so Leys's scathing indictment of the China Experts in this book —beyond doubt one of the most definitive polemics ever written against the tolerance among Western intellectuals for Marxist totalitarianism—is, sadly, relevant and necessary even at this late date. Small wonder that the doyen of the Experts, John K. Fairbank (for whom Harvard University's prestigious center of East Asian studies is named), in a recent review of this book in the *New York Times*, concludes by complaining that Leys's admiration for the traditional culture decimated by the CCP is elitist and therefore morally suspect. This is equivalent to castigating a scholar who professes admiration for the poetry of Dante or the painting of Rembrandt on the grounds that these artists did not live in "egalitarian" societies! After all, was that culture not built upon the backs of the oppressed peasantry? Besides, Fairbank's assumption that the CCP has in fact made things better for the peasants is highly disputable. Stephen Mosher's *Broken Earth—The Rural Chinese* (1983) paints a different picture.

Leys is, as it happens, a true connoisseur of the rich traditions of poetry and painting in China, and he is a trustworthy guide through the complexities of these arts. The opening essay of the book is as good an introduction to the poetry-painting relationship that was so important in China as has ever been published. Unfortunately, Leys does overstate the vagueness or looseness of syntax in lines of Chinese verse (apparently under the influence of François Cheng's ill-conceived attempt to impose "semiotics" upon Chinese poetry); in so doing, he goes to the opposite extreme from such scholars as Edward Schafer, who insists on a tight rigidity of syntactic structure in Chinese poetic diction. Leys is on the right track when he emphasizes a certain flexibility but pushes the concept too far. A related mistake is his attempt to rehabilitate Pound's discredited reputation as a Chinese translator; surely Leys is intelligent enough to comprehend that there can be no good translation without a firm grasp of the original language, which Pound by Leys's own admission utterly lacked! But the essay is redeemed in the end by Leys's sensitivity and his obviously sincere love for Chinese culture.

There is, however, a serious problem with this book, one which I believe to be of broad significance in contemporary Western intellectual life. For many years, those like Leys and myself who admired the achievements of Chinese culture felt an almost missionary zeal to proselytize on its behalf in a world where the primacy of Western culture was supposedly taken for granted. But as early as the first decade of this century, G.K. Chesterton was describing the bizarre phenomenon of a sizable number of enthusiasts for things Eastern who were actually arguing (explicitly or implicitly) for the moral and aesthetic *superiority* of the East to the West! I

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have reluctantly come to believe that this tendency has grown to a veritable (albeit still partially underground) flood-tide in our time. Underlying it is a deep-rooted belief on the part of many Western intellectuals that their own traditions are spiritually bankrupt, and that one must look elsewhere for inspiration—China, Japan, India, etc. A strong current in this type of thinking is a belief that Chinese thought, for example, is actually more advanced than the Jewish and Christian religious traditions because it is based on striving for *harmony*, whereas Jewish and Christian creeds are tension-ridden. Buddha's tranquil smile is preferred to the rabbi's stern visage, or to Christ's agonized expression as He hangs upon the cross.

One might, of course, trace this mentality back to the *philosophes* of the Englightenment, whose vision of a harmonious, humanistic near-paradise in distant China was the intellectual equivalent of the chinoiserie that was so modish in the 18th-century decorative arts. There is no mistaking the bitter hatred in those men for what Voltaire called *l'infâme* (existing social conditions? the Church?), which led in turn to a yearning for a better world somewhere else. As it was no longer possible, apparently, for serious thinkers to imagine such a world in Heaven, it had perforce to be located somewhere on earth. Reports of China and early translations from the Confucian classics seemed to indicate that China might be that golden land. The psychological process involved foreshadows that of the "political pilgrims" of a later century so brilliantly analyzed by Paul Hollander. (Unlike some Russophiles in the 1920's and 30's, modern sinologists do not have the excuse of inadequate or distorted knowledge; on the contrary, their knowledge of China is accurate and highly detailed, which underscores the degree to which the idealization of other cultures is the result not of misinformation but rather of willfullness.)

It would, I think, be a mistake to trace this complex of ideas still further back to the great medieval travelers like Marco Polo. Marco Polo *et al.* were indeed fascinated by China—but they never questioned an axiomatic faith in the primacy of Western civilization for them. What is new in the *philosophes* is the use of China as a foil against which to criticize Western civilization, not merely in superficial details but in quite fundamental ways. They can, therefore, be seen as laying the foundation for a later "Orientalism" diametrically opposed to that described by Edward W. Said in his provocative and controversial book *Orientalism* (1978). Said identifies what he considers to be the hidden agenda of much Western scholarship on the East (his primary concern is with the Islamic Orient, although his book has stimulated highly emotional debate and even invective among sinologists and japanologists)—namely, a desire to facilitate or justify political domination of the Orient by Western imperialism. Little does Said seem to realize (or perhaps he does but is simply not interested) the seductive power of the opposite phemomenon: Orientalists so far from desiring to *dominate* the Orient that they are in fact ready to *surrender* to it—spiritually.

Nowhere in Leys's book does he openly advocate such a position. But in his otherwise excellent discussions of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Pere Huc, there is an unmistakable implication that the Western missionary enterprise was ultimately "absurd" (Leys's own word) because it was face to face with a culture at least the equal of its own, and perhaps even superior. One senses Leys's delight in contemplating this very absurdity and his further personal belief that modern Western man would be well-advised to learn from the traditional Chinese. What we are to learn from them is apparently the "religion" of "harmony," best embodied for Leys in the magnificent tradition of Chinese landscape painting.

In taking such a position, Leys at once ignores certain quite unharmonious aspects of Chinese religious practice (e.g., the ecstatic and devotional tendencies in Pure Land Buddhism with its startling visions of heaven and hell, to say nothing of Chinese folk religion, in which the literati were often participants) and aligns himself with the Aestheticism whose role in 20th-century Western intellectual life would be hard to overestimate. Ultimately an outgrowth of Romanticism (itself linked in various ways with the Enlightenment), Aestheticism substitutes art for religion and hence the artist for God. A 1983 article in *Apollo* by David Park Curry clearly documents the close relationship between the Orientalist enthusiasm of collectors like Charles Freer and artists like Whistler and Aestheticism in *fin de siècle* America and Europe. The connection continues in Leys.

But to the extent that Leys leans in this direction, is he not actually part of the real problem (like the China Experts) rather than the solution? Whether Westerners idealize the world "over there" *politically* (as the Experts have done, following in the footsteps of the *philosophes*) or *aesthetically* (as Leys seems to be doing), they are still participating in the willful rejection of our society, a rejection out of which such ideologies as Marxism grew in the first place! The modern intellectual likes to believe that his alienation is a natural outgrowth of the moral hollowness of his own society. Ironically, the quintessential modern Chinese intellectual, Lu Hsün (Lu Xun, 1881-1936), about whom Leys has some intelligent things to say, rejected traditional Chinese culture for many of the same reasons that Western intellectuals have rejected Western traditions. Like them, he looked elsewhere for the answer. So as Western intellectuals have looked East, Lu Hsün looked *West*!

Is it not possible that intellectuals actually carry the responsibility for our own alienation? Have we not *chosen* it, by repudiating the age-old foundations of Western civilization? Is not Leys's

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Aestheticism as much an attempt to *escape* from traditional authority and prescription as the political self-delusion that insists on projecting a utopian enterprise upon some other part of the globe? And are not both these undertakings refined and sophisticated analogues of the adolescent rebellion against parental and other modes of authority which has now reached crisis proportions among our youth?

Perhaps what we need to do first is to stop trying to escape, and then we can start rebuilding what we have right here. In such an endeavor, knowledge of the wisdom and beauty of traditional Chinese culture and thought could indeed play a most constructive role—Confucianism in particular has much to offer in the formulation of a response to disturbing aspects of political ideology. But let us realize that when we idealize another culture we do it no honor; and let us keep our priorities in line as we strive to reweave the frayed tapestry of civilization.

REVISIONS

Victorian Restoration

Vergil compared human progress with a man rowing against the current: If he relaxes at the oars for only a moment, he begins to drift backwards, inexorably, with the flow of the river. Sometimes it takes several generations to realize what exactly is being lost in the course of time. Throughout the 18th century, the peculiarly Protestant civilization of England was slowly being transformed into something else; the forms remained—the church, the crown, the universities—but they were the facades of a building in the process of being gutted. The manners and morals of the upper classes in the early 19th century would make a congressman blush, and the tone was set by the bloated, tasteless Germans who occupied the throne. By far the best of the Georges was the high-spirited king who lost his American inheritance, but for the latter part of his reign poor George III was utterly mad as the result of (probably) porphyria. His sons, the "wicked dukes," led lives that are best forgotten. When a properly reared young woman came to the throne and had the wisdom to marry a decent and intelligent cousin, the stage was set for the social restoration that has been known, ever since, as the Victorian era.

Victoria has had her share of biographers—pedantic, political, and polemical. Lytton Strachey was at once among the best and worst: best because he took the queen quite seriously and worst because he was Lytton Strachey—the sort of vermin that Victoria had sent scuttling under baseboards. Stanley Weintraub's *Victoria: An Intimate Biography* (New York: E.P. Dutton; $26.95) is a well-researched, popular biography by a competent literary historian, and there are worse ways to spend a week. What is wrong with Weintraub's book is summed up by the subtitle: an intimate biography. The last such work I remember reading was Fawn Brodie's scandalous treatment of Jefferson—little more than an extended lie. Weintraub is no liar, but in his eagerness to paint Victoria in the colors of a passionate woman, he misreads a great deal more than the queen's character. Who, I wonder, will be surprised to discover that the queen was passionately in love with Prince Albert or that, to all appearances, they were what we should now call "sexually compatible"? While social historians like Lawrence Stone and Philippe Ariès have tried to "prove" that our ancestors were different from us in every possible way, their work cannot be taken seriously by any sensible person who has read his grandmother's diary. Cultures change, but the basic facts of life—"birth, copulation, and death"—and of the human character do not. We are one with Adam and Eve, bound to them inextricably by our genetic code. Albert and Victoria and all their generation were simply human.

The broader context of Victoria's reign is entirely missing. Everything comes down to personalities. Weintraub virtually fawns upon Disraeli and repeats every bit of tittle-tattle against Gladstone he can find. Because he has no grasp of political history, he obscures even the significance of Victoria's extended family connections with Prussia and Russia. Add to this a certain propensity for jaded vulgarisms—the queen is said to be satisfied "between the sheets"—and an obsession with what we used to call female complaints, and you have a book even more repellent than Strachey's.

One virtue, however, the book has: By dwelling upon Victoria's personal life, it becomes clear how un-English she really was. She and Albert were never happier than when they were visiting the old country; they settled upon Scotland for vacations, because it reminded them of Coburg. Although Weintraub does not say so, it becomes apparent that part of what Victoria disliked in Gladstone were the very qualities that made him "the people's Will." While Disraeli exulted in ceremony and was flattered to be able to flatter royalty, the evangelical and very English Gladstone had no stomach for such nonsense.

There are many reasons why Victorianism was doomed to fail, but there is one that has not, to my knowledge, been considered: In her conception of morals and manners, the queen was as foreign as Charles II, who had spent his life at the French Court. The English took well enough to the Christmas trees and domestic gemütlichkeit, but there are limits. Many Americans confess to a similar uneasiness when they hear tales of conservative plans to use the nation's schools as part of an effort to rebuild (really create) an ideology of democratic nationalism. As one friend of ours would say, all this talk of the American experiment in democracy is, frankly, un-American. (TF)

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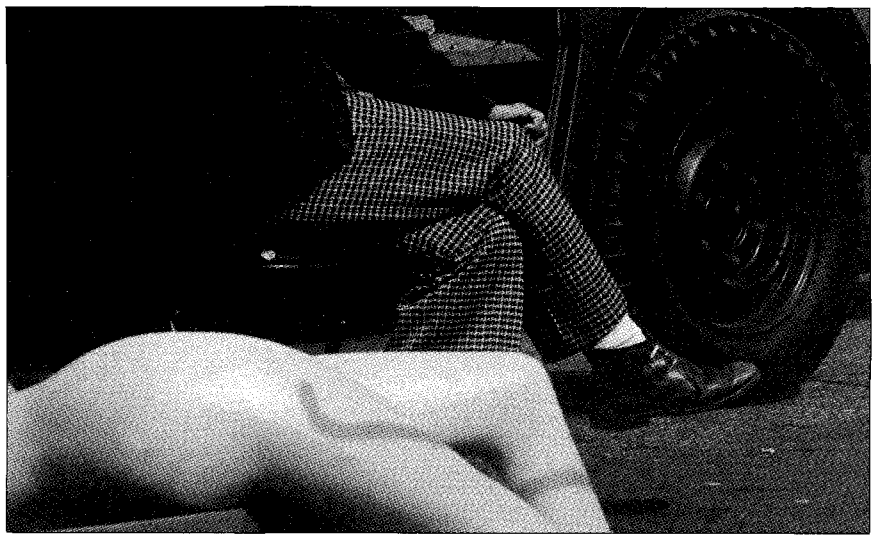
The American Flea Circus

Fleamarkets by Joel D. Levinson; postpaid signed editions available from PM Publications, 8352 Kent Dr., El Cerrito, CA 94530; $16.95 softcover; $28.95 hardcover (CA residents add 6½% sales tax).



Chronicles rarely reviews a book of photographs. For all the technical perfection of the camera's eye and for all the ingenuity exercised by photographers, the end result hardly ever seems to justify the effort. A good painting —even a still life—is alive; it almost breathes on its own, while a successful photograph so often seems—no matter how "candid"—dead. Much photography is an attempt to freeze-dry experience, and the product is as insipid as a cup of Brim.

There are, of course, artists who have chosen the camera as their vehicle, but even the masters seem too eager to show off by photographing famous men and natural wonders. We often respond more directly to the amateur snapshots taken by our friends. Imagine an intelligent friend who set out to explore the familiar and commonplace world of flea markets. Imagine that friend to have the imagination of a poet as well as being an accomplished photographer, and you will form some idea of Joel Levinson's work in *Fleamarkets*.

It is a marvelous book whose images linger long after the pictures have been put down. Suburbanites who have come to believe in the sterility and sameness of American life have only to turn the pages to come upon a world as rich with folly and bad taste—the grit of real experience—as anything in George Ade or H.L. Mencken.

Fleamarkets is touring museums as a one-man exhibition in Europe and the U.S. beginning June 30, 1987, at the Amerika Haus Berlin; then to Ludwig Museum in Aachen, West Germany; and opening at the Hunter Museum in Tennessee on Nov. 15, 1987—Jan. 3. 1988.

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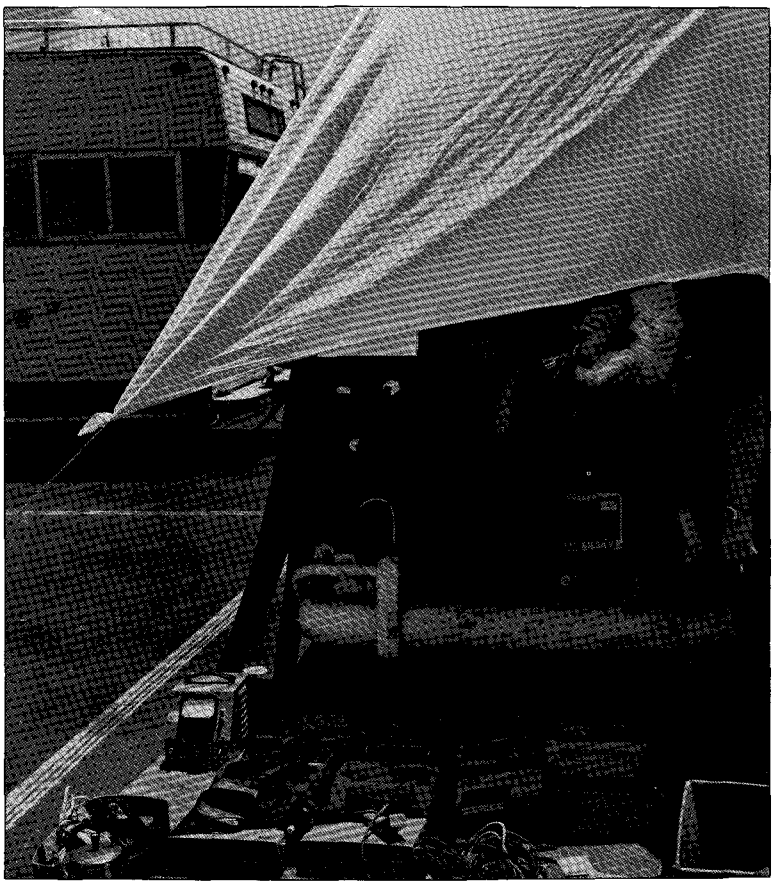

"For three years in the mid-seventies Levinson traveled throughout the state of California photographing its vast and varied flea markets. Instead of finding them a homogenized hot-tub culture which some East Coast media had been propagating, he saw them as a microcosm of American society. Apart from serving as a turntable for the recycling of artifacts, a great variety of attitudes and lifestyles manifested itself in buyers and sellers—and it was this that captured his imagination."

—from the introduction to *Fleamarkets*

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Invasion of the Child-Snatchers

The Child Abuse Industry: Outrageous Facts & Everyday Rebellions Against a System that Threatens Every North American Family **by Mary Pride, Westchester, IL: Crossway Books; $8.95.**

Who has more rights in the American judicial system—a man accused of murder or one accused of child abuse? The accused murderer is guaranteed the good old English right of trial by jury; he's presumed innocent until proved guilty. He may even demand a court-appointed lawyer (if he can't afford his own). The accused child abuser is tried by French law: He's presumed guilty until proved innocent and may even lose his children without so much as a court hearing. Mary Pride drives home the disturbing contrast between the accused murderer and the accused child abuser as one of the many points in her hard-hitting exposé on the crusading "child-savers."

After poking holes in the vastly inflated and self-serving child-abuse statistics that bureaucrats and journalists bandy about, she shows how therapeutic professionals have turned public sympathy for the abused child into a blank check for their own agencies. Few things are sadder than the rare cases of genuine child abuse, but media hysteria and licensed child-snatching can only make things worse. Pride recounts instances of social workers dragging screaming children away from parents later proved to be innocent of everything but moving next to busybodies. Other guiltless families have suffered financial ruin because of the court costs of fighting anonymous accusers and groundless charges. In Seattle, 1,500 families falsely accused of child abuse have filed a $1.5 billion class-action suit against the State of Washington for unjustly seizing their children and disrupting their families.

But besides collecting horror stories, Pride has compiled all of the child-abuse laws, state by state, in a useful appendix. (If the vagueness of these statutes doesn't scare you, just consider that those accused can argue their case before a jury only in the state of Utah—everywhere else, a single social worker or judge may hand down the verdict. Here in Illinois, the *Chicago Tribune* recently reported that officials once encouraged state "investigators" simply to classify all reports of child abuse as "true" and pass them along to case workers.) In her conclusion, Pride outlines a sensible agenda of things average people can do to help change a deplorable situation. Footnotes and an excellent bibliography attest to painstaking research. Too bad that in deciding not to do an index, the publisher limited the book's value as a reference book and so reduced the number of libraries likely to buy it. (BC)

Love and Death

by Michael Warder

Life and Fate **by Vasily Grossman, New York: Harper & Row.**

Perhaps it is inevitable that *Life and Fate* by Vasily Grossman has been compared to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. There are obvious parallels. Tolstoy wrote a lengthy book on the unsuccessful Napoleonic invasion of Russia, while Grossman wrote a lengthy book on the unsuccessful Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Both works also deal with central philosophical issues, especially causality and meaning of history and man's freedom, or lack of it. Both authors also clustered their numerous characters around a central family. But these obvious parallels are not enough to pronounce, as some have done, that Grossman is a "Soviet Tolstoy" and his epic "the great Russian novel of the twentieth century." Besides, even the most laudatory critics have not proclaimed *Life and Fate* "the greatest novel ever written." John Galsworthy, E.M. Forster, Hugh Walpole, and others have used such superlatives to describe *War and Peace*. Nonetheless, *Life and Fate* surely is a good historical novel, and perhaps a great one. It also must be seen as a courageous witness to the ugly similarities of Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism.

The setting for the action of *Life and Fate* is late 1942 and the spring of 1943. The focus is Stalingrad, although Siberia, Moscow, a German POW camp, and the German front are woven into the setting as well. Grossman does not focus on Stalin and Hitler and the key generals of the Stalingrad siege. Instead, he's concerned with a tank commander, a scientist, a commissar, and a variety of other seemingly lesser mortals. Tolstoy sought to debunk the "great man" theory of history and the idea that writers, whom he called "scribblers," determine history. He focused on Napoleon, leader of France and the French army, and General Kutuzov, the apparently bungling military leader who used to fall asleep during key staff meetings, but who knew his limits and rallied his army to victory.

Tolstoy's sense of scale was greater than Grossman's. *War and Peace* spans events from 1805 to 1812. Although Napoleon's attack on Moscow was in many respects successful, as the city was burnt to the ground and the Russian army retreated, it is not Moscow that is the focus of Tolstoy's piece. Rather, it is the whole process of conflict between the armies, from the Battle of Austerlitz, to Borodino, to the series of skirmishes after the pillage of Moscow that all led to the French retreat. Indeed, Tolstoy goes out of his way to belittle the idea that there was one decisive battle. He points instead to the will of the Russians and their army to destroy their own cities, or let the French do it, rather than let the French defeat them. He also shows that the Russian army, after retreating four months across the breadth of European Russia, simply refused to capitulate.

In Stalingrad it seems the situation was different. Stalin drew a line before the city with his name and ordered that it be held at all costs. The battle seemed decisive when the Soviets persevered and mounted their effective counterattack and encircled the Sixth Army of Field Marshall von Paulus. And yet, what actually happened is not too clear, despite all the ensuing propaganda.

One of the interesting characters in *Life and Fate* that illustrates the falsehood of the accepted Soviet view of Stalingrad is Captain Grekov. He holds Stalin and the Communist Party in utter contempt. He defends a key

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house, virtually surrounded by the Germans. In this oasis of freedom, cut off from political commissars, Captain Grekov, without the trappings of rank, wages effective warfare against the invaders. Stalin's order means nothing to him and his men, who simply fight to defend Russia.

Grossman's battle descriptions are excellent. He served in World War II as a correspondent and spent much time at the front. He knows his subject and was, perhaps after Ilya Ehrenburg, the best-known journalist in the Soviet Union in the war years. Tolstoy, on the other hand, wrote *War and Peace* after having served as an officer in the early 1850's in campaigns in the Caucasus and in the Crimean War of 1854-1856. Therefore, his battle scenes are every bit as good as Grossman's, while his grasp of the overall conduct of war and of the disposition of troops is far superior.

One of the central characters of *Life and Fate* is a theoretical nuclear physicist, Victor Shtrum. Shtrum is Jewish and has little regard for Marxist-Stalinist thought as the key to new discoveries in physics. During a wave of anti-Semitism, he is harshly judged by his colleagues and appears destined for arrest, just after a major scientific breakthrough. How could his coworkers honor a man whose physics is politically unacceptable? After all, Shtrum even admires Einstein! Then comes, out of the blue, a solicitous call from Stalin. This changes the attitude of his peers, as well as his own disposition towards the leader whom he had previously loathed. It is a very interesting rendering of the tensions that affect scientists and other intellectuals in the Soviet system. Without good science, the war machine and the economy die. Political leaders, most of all, cannot do without science and its sturdy son, technology.

Grossman had his own experience to draw upon in describing this tension between intellectual rigor and political conformity. In fact, Stalin's death in 1953 precluded a possible trip to Siberia for Grossman himself, a Jew who fell into disrepute as anti-Semitism became rampant in the USSR. It should be noted that all copies of *Life and Fate* were confiscated by the KGB in 1961, after the manuscript was submitted for publication. How the microfilm of the manuscript reached the West in the late 1970's is not clear, although the exiled writer Vladimir Voinovich played a major role in this apparent breach of security.

Another important character in Grossman's epic is Sofya Levington. She is a Soviet Jewish doctor in a German camp in occupied territory. From her we learn the thoughts and feelings of an educated woman as she is rounded up and eventually herded naked into the gas chamber with other men, women, and children. This was the fate of Grossman's own mother. He was with the Russian troops when they saw the death camps and filed the first reports of that aspect of hell. His portrait of Sofya Levington and her fate is rich in detail and emotion. Stalin's outright anti-Semitism, which becomes publicly evident in the postwar years, is examined by Grossman as far back as 1942-43, illustrating the basic similarity of the two totalitarianisms.

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Grossman's characters, however, are not as lifelike as Tolstoy's. Count Bezukhov, Prince Andrew Bolkonski, Dolokhov, "the beautiful Helene," and all the others, even very minor characters, are so real that we want to know what happened to them after the events covered by the story. Tolstoy tries to satisfy this desire with two epilogues, but we still want to know more. This cannot be said of Grossman's characters.

And what of Grossman's philosophy? He believes in freedom and kindness. Evil is often brought about by persons who believe in their ideas of good. So Stalin and the Communists, and Hitler and the Nazis, each according to their notions of good, inflict their concepts on the world. Grossman also attacks religions as being guilty of the same fault. In this, he distinguishes between the founders of religions and their institutional descendants. For him, good is typified by irrational and spontaneous acts of kindness. Grossman dramatically illustrates this belief with a vivid scene in which a Russian woman offers a cup to a defeated German soldier surrounded by angry Russian citizens in their destroyed neighborhood.

Tolstoy, for his part, reveals his philosophy of history in greater detail in *War and Peace*. It is a combination of Christian mysticism and fatalism which has more depth and texture than the ideas of Grossman. Grossman himself is conscious of Tolstoy's vision to which he refers throughout the book. Indeed, the character Ikonnikov, who plays the Russian fool in a German concentration camp, typifies much of Tolstoy's thinking. Grossman's perspective, nonetheless, is more social and less historical and mystic than Tolstoy's. Given the era in which he lived and his experience, perhaps this more modest and down-to-earth view is to be expected.

Life and Fate is not as overpowering as *War and Peace* and does not overshadow Solzhenitsyn, Pasternak, and others. Nonetheless, it is a significant work which helps us to understand the experiences of those who lived in the Soviet Union during and after World War II.

Michael Warder is executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

Institutionalized Music

by John Vaio

The House of Music: Art in an Era of Institutions **by Samuel Lipman, Boston: David R. Godine; $22.50.**

Samuel Lipman's pieces on music came out originally in magazines, chiefly in *Commentary* and *The New Criterion*. The obvious question arises. Are enough of these essays of sufficient interest and importance to justify republication? The answer is happily *yes*. Lipman's candor, taste, and intelligence as well as the wide range of his musical interests make him one of the most consistently interesting music critics in America.

What is especially worth noting is the stern assessment of performances given under the most august auspices. Too often after attending a celebrated display of astounding mediocrity one reads with amazement sober approval and commendation in the daily press. Lipman's ruthless honesty comes as a relief. Admittedly, almost all the events covered are confined to Lincoln Center, but—for good or ill—PBS, if not history, has conspired to make this narrow piece of Manhattan the musical center of our hemisphere.

The negative side of Lipman's criticism is nicely balanced by much that is positive as well as instructive. Notable here is the sympathetic and persuasive account of Glen Gould's strengths and idiosyncrasies as an interpreter. Impressive too are the acute observations on the different style of *Lieder*-singing in the 20's and the 30's compared to that of the decades following World War II. His piece on "Singing Wolf" should be read by anyone interested in this important art, even those who take issue (as I do) with his depreciation of postwar performers.

Some essays are of limited interest, precisely because they report a brief period of past musical activity. For example, a vigorous and unsparing critique of Zubin Mehta's first two seasons with the New York Philharmonic is still worth reading, but an *addendum* covering the next two seasons would have provided a better perspective from which to consider Lipman's judgment. The book's subtitle (*Art in an Era of Institutions*) is not quite appropriate since it properly characterizes only about one-third of the essays collected here. Moreover, the "era" of some of these institutions (the Metropolitan Opera, for instance) extends far beyond the recent half-decade on which the book concentrates.

But Lipman does have a valid point: Precisely in his time as a critic, the nature and impact of these institutions has been significantly altered, both by televised broadcasts and by public funding. The New Era demands serious consideration and gets it from Lipman in an eminently readable mixture of wit and controversy.

John Vaio is associate professor of classics at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

A Second Opinion

by Jacob Neusner

An Autobiography: Confessions of a Parish Priest **by Andrew Greeley, New York: Simon & Schuster.**

This profoundly conservative book forms a powerful personal argument against the liberal dogma that "modernity" destroys religion. Much of the left, militantly secular as it is, has attempted to make it "self-evident" that no reasonable person can believe in God, let alone in a particular religious tradition and its revelation. "We all know" that religion is a dying vestige of a repudiated past. Andrew Greeley has challenged that dogma and affirmed the traditional life and way of the Roman Catholic Church. In his autobiography he tells with intellect and wit not only his own tale but also the story of the Church he has served.

A distinguished sociologist, Andrew Greeley in his *Unsecular Man* argued that in the world of modernism, modernization, and modernity, religion was not only not dying but was, in fact, entering a new age of centrality in human life and culture. In his autobiography, Greeley shows precisely how, in the condition of social change called modernization, as Roman Catholics moved from the status of

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poor and beleaguered immigrants to suburban affluence, they found new meaning and renewed faith in the Roman Catholic Church and faith. The story is told in personal terms, which makes the document all the more compelling. The message is for the entire world of letters and learning.

Let me translate Greeley's picture into one I know better to show the universal relevance of his ideas. When, a generation ago, Jews began to abandon the second area of settlement after immigration—for example, Roxbury and Dorchester for Boston, or the Bronx and Brooklyn for New York—into the suburbs, Brookline, and even Newton (or Queens and Westchester and "the Island," for New York), people assumed the Jewish community was breaking up. In fact, it was only changing; the deep roots of Jewish distinctiveness—what sociologists call "ethnicity"—were in no way weakened by uprooting and replanting. Jews built new synagogues and engaged new rabbis and entered a fresh chapter in the history of Judaism in America.

In Greeley's book we learn how the equivalent process of movement to middle-class status and suburbs affected Irish Catholics in Chicago. We find, within the Catholic idiom, the same fears, the same concerns, and, above all, the same change in attitude. For just as Jews were going to college and coming home able to ask their own questions and read, and even write, their own books, without rabbis to tell them what to think and believe, so Roman Catholics were going to college—but staying Catholic. It meant, however, a different kind of Church, from one that had been formed to defend and exclude and apologize and explain.

The life of the faith was in Greeley's time moving from one flowing from an authority on high to one reaching upward from a community of engagement and commitment. The new Church was to be one in which individual Catholics pursued, through intellect and fellowship, a new life of piety and faith, resting on conscience and character. It was not a Protestantized Catholicism. But it also was a Catholicism that had gone beyond the defensive attitudes of immigrants, persecuted and (quite reasonably) frightened, and also beyond the long-standing pugnacity of the Tridentine Church: the Church that rolled back the Protestant Reformation, corrected the errors of the Catholic Church of old, and regained its initiative and ascendancy in most of Christendom, from the seventh century to our own day.

Greeley himself both lived through and understood the meaning of that shift, which was initially feared by some as a mark of the weakening of the Church and the Roman Catholic community. In his scholarly work and theological writings, he drew attention to the deep roots of Roman Catholic faith, the permanence of Irish and other Roman Catholic ethnicity, as well as the secure foundations of the Church in the lives of its community. But he also argued that the important social changes required a different pol-

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icy toward lay leadership and piety, a new kind of priest, and a different politics from one of authority focused upon the priesthood. Greeley further takes us to Rome during the Council and faces us with the issues which, in particular, related to his understanding of the sociology of Roman Catholic Christianity in the West.

By telling his own story, Greeley has made vivid and engaging the history of Roman Catholic Christianity in an age of unusual change. He may be compared to a kind of human seismograph, reporting an earthquake of 8.9 on his particular Richter scale. Noted, in his academic career, as a sophisticated sociologist with special gifts in conducting social surveys and interpreting their results, Greeley here shows a different sociology, more accessible to a broader audience of religion-scholars (as well as religious people). His rare combination of imagination and scholarly acumen marks him as a leading scholar of the history and sociology of Roman Catholic Christianity in this country, who through studying Roman Catholic Christianity teaches us much about all religions in America. His books sometimes reviewed by people who prefer to review him instead of his message, Greeley has had to endure a somewhat unfriendly reception within elements of Roman Catholic life, and he devotes a fair amount of attention to his struggle. But this is the work of a great soul and a great scholar, and as discourse vastly transcends the private and the political.

Greeley records the human meaning of the profound social changes he has observed in an account framed in part as his own story, in part as a sequence of stories of others, in part as reflection, poetry, theology, and allegory. A witty and compelling writer, Greeley's versatility comes to the fore in this book, too, at times chatty, at times academic, at times profoundly moving. He closes with a parable that I found so intensely moving and true as to be almost painful. While, by some standards, Greeley really is not an exceptionally productive writer, whatever he accomplishes is marked by uniform vitality and intellectual power. In this book, he certainly presents himself as a writer of depth and of an exalted spirit. This autobiography will be read when some of his important novels have become theological classics, and his major works of scholarship, such as *Unsecular Man*, will have also run their course and become preserved in amber. Describing a religious world of enormous consequence to our understanding of what is happening to religion in America and the modern world, Greeley's book forms a testament to taste, judgment, conscience, character, wit —but above all, courage and dignity.

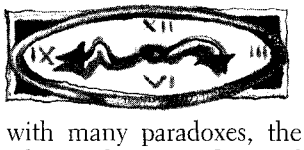
Andrew Greeley is one of the masters of the modern social study of religion. He has thought deeply about what it means to be a Roman Catholic in a free society. His autobiography deserves a reading as an important spiritual document and statement —whether or not one likes the author or has even heard of him before.

Jacob Neusner is Ungerleider Distinguished Scholar of Judaic Studies at Brown University.

The Triumph of Time

***Evolution as Entropy: Toward a Unified Theory of Biology* by Daniel R. Brooks and E.O. Wiley, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.**

The second law of thermodynamics poses a problem for evolutionary biologists. While it seems to predict increasing disorder over time, the record of evolution suggests ever-increasing order and higher levels of organization. The common solution to the paradox was to look for a balance between organic systems and their environment. Perhaps there was, as Schrödinger suggested, a trade-off by which organisms grew more orderly at the expense of the universe.



As with many paradoxes, the best approach may be to confront it head-on, which is what Brooks and Wiley have done, by putting forward the theory that evolution is actually a biological operation of the second law. In their view, entropy is not merely a tendency to disorder but the characteristic of all "time-dependent behavior." The growth and development of an organism and the evolution of the species become more a matter of irreversible history than of mere survival of the fittest. The history of a species, therefore, significantly determines its "future trajectories." Successful species are not necessarily those which adapt best to their environment. Indeed, the authors speak of "the survival of the adequate," because evolution is a process "historically restrained . . . regardless of the environment."

One intended benefit of this theory is to reconcile the conflict between strict neo-Darwinists, for whom reproductive competition is the sole determining factor, and the believers in orthogenesis, the notion that evolutionary changes have a purpose or direction. For Brooks and Wiley, there is obviously no purpose, no Aristotelian *telos* toward which life is tending; however, there is a historically determined process of development which stipulates that the longer a genealogical population (e.g., a species) persists, the more self-organized it becomes. Such a process is obviously constrained by environmental factors, but they alone do not determine the direction of change.

Evolution as Entropy is not for the casual reader, even one with a Ph.D. in zoology. It is a densely argued patchwork of speculation and journal articles that will perplex even its authors a dozen years hence. They have been generous, though, with prelude and reprise as well as chapter summaries, but in these sections too they cannot resist entering into learned quarrels. This is all the more the pity, since they think clearly and write, for scientists, that is, effectively.

In any event, it is a bold work —explicitly Aristotelian, and, despite a sappy concluding paragraph ("We would like nothing better than to make sure that violent human behavior could no longer be justified and condoned as an unalterable consequence of an evolutionary legacy" [how glibly they slip from *is* to *ought*!]), it deserves attention from anyone who believes that biological theory can be used in an account of human behavior. (TF)

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Letter From Florida

by Janet Scott Barlow

How I Spent My Christmas Vacation

The day after Christmas this family took off for the National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship in Orlando, Florida. The National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship is not the kind of event a parent—this parent, anyway—ever anticipates attending. It is the kind of event a parent discovers herself at because of the interests or accomplishments of her child.

I spent three days at this competition in order to see my daughter and her friends, nine girls I like, do a routine lasting exactly two minutes and eight seconds, a routine on which they had worked every day for four months while still maintaining civil relationships with one another—a feat I considered easily as impressive as making it to the National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship in the first place.

These girls went to Florida as competitive novices, the first squad in their school's history to be so chosen. A hint that they might not completely reflect the nature of the event came at the Orlando airport when I saw countless flocks of girls (and a few boys) in coordinated outfits, carrying countless matching, custom-made garment bags, which held countless cheerleading uniforms, shoes, pom-poms, and hair ribbons. Shepherding these girls were countless parents and advisers, most of them attired in their kids' school colors. In addition, these adults appeared to be wearing what is referred to in the sports world as a "game face." They were *serious*.

As for my daughter, she was wearing a sweatsuit, and her single cheerleading uniform was folded in a Baggie in her suitcase. To make things even more interesting, the suitcase containing the Baggie containing the uniform (not to mention the rest of her clothes) had missed the connection in Atlanta. The suitcase, we were assured, would arrive "in an hour and a half." Something told me that the chances of the suitcase arriving in an hour and a half were about even with my finding a game face for the National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship.

Eight hours later the suitcase arrived, and we rushed it to our daughter's hotel. Parents were not allowed to stay in the same hotel with cheerleaders, a rule I saw the wisdom of while delivering the suitcase. The elevators were jammed with barefoot girls. The hallways were filled with the sound of squealing and the smell of nail polish. The place was one giant slumber party—a glorious environment if you are 16 years old, a form of punishment if you are 42 and lacking a game face.

While at the hotel, my husband and I went to the ballroom to watch the girls practice. For those who tend to tense up at the sight of young bodies flying, flipping, leaping, and falling, this was another environment to avoid. Me, I tend to tense up. Fast. We stood against the wall, one of us nervous, one of us having a great time, watching the varsity cheerleaders from

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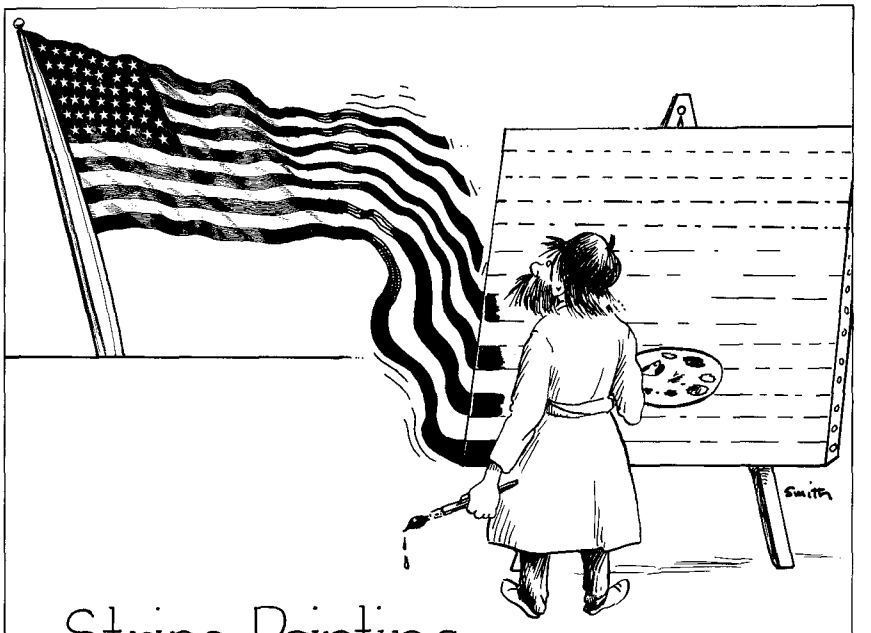

Stripe Painting
Returning To The Womb

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Cincinnati, Ohio (one of them in borrowed shorts), do their stuff.

Their stuff was not encouraging. The squad's big move, their finale, was an extension. An extension is accomplished when two girls on the floor lift their arms and lock their elbows while a third girl stands 12 feet in the air on their hands. It is the job of the girl being extended to balance herself securely, snap her arms skyward victoriously, maintain a smile, and generally look as though there is no place on earth she'd rather be than perched high in the air on the hands of two friends. While this is going on, the rest of the squad are creating a pleasing picture of symmetry by taking equally unnecessary risks.

The girl chosen to be extended is, of course, the smallest. The smallest girl was, naturally, my daughter. Over the past months, I had come to think of the extension as The Extension and to disapprove of it as a mother on principle. (Why go up there? Is this a skill you can use later in life?) However, as a physical coward, one who would pay to avoid both extending and being extended, I was forced to admire such a stunt.

But on this night, the night before the competition, The Extension was not going well. The girls were tired; their timing was off. Their arms would buckle, then my daughter's legs would buckle, then she would fall. Are we having fun yet?

Our daughter's squad was scheduled to perform at 3:56 Saturday afternoon. We were there by 1:30 to see what we could see. We saw plenty. The National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship is an enormous event, with thousands of girls from around the country competing in routines that are physically daring, musically sophisticated, and altogether impressive. It quickly became apparent that the best squads had several things in common. They all parted their hair down the back and tied it high above their ears in fluffy little-girl "puppy tails." (I would like to have had the hair spray concession that weekend.) They all spoke with Southern accents. ("Go! Fight! Wee-yun!") They all smiled constantly and aggressively. (At one point my daughter marveled to herself, "The fakiness in this place is sort of amazing.") And they were all *very* good at things like The Extension.

It was also obvious that the afternoon would be marked by an unrestrained adolescent emotionalism the likes of which I had never encountered. Whether doing well or "messing up"—"messing up" counting mainly as a fall, usually from an Extension—the reaction was the same: screaming, crying, hugging. With the squads that messed up, there seemed to be a little less hugging and a lot more crying.

Thirty minutes before Cincinnati's performance I went to the ladies' room. A mistake. The ladies' room of the Orange County Convention Center was on that afternoon the retreat of every cheerleader who had messed up. There was sobbing. There was wailing. One girl had locked herself in a stall and would not come out, despite the soothing words of her adviser. Scanning this scene, it occurred to me for the first time to question whether my daughter would lock herself in the ladies' room if she messed up The Extension. I didn't think so, but I knew for sure that if she did, I would not stand at the door trying to coax her out.

At 3:56 the girls we came to see walked on stage and smiled (though not aggressively) at the judges. By 3:59 they were busy hugging. Yes, The Extension worked. Yes, my daughter smiled and looked as though there was no place on earth she'd rather be—which at that moment might very well have been accurate. And yes, I felt like a million bucks.

No, they did not make the finals, a group of 10 squads (out of 100) chosen from their division to compete the following night. The finalists were announced back in the hotel ballroom, which held a terrible crush of people, most of them anxious parents. A Cheerleader Mom from Natchez, Mississippi—information I gathered from the large buttons pinned to her sweater—turned to me and said, "Before this is all over, I'm just gonna bust!" This rather startled me, since I didn't feel at all as if I was gonna bust. Faint, maybe; bust, no.

Later, we went back to our daughter's room for the most memorable half-hour of the trip. First, there was the *room*. Four girls had lived there for two days, which should give any thinking person an idea of what the place looked like. For good measure, they had told the maid she could skip 1639. Considering the state of the room, this decision (1) made no discernible sense and (2) probably saved the maid's life. Suffice to say there were piles of clothes everywhere, most of them having a life of their own. (They grew even as I stood there.) But amidst the clothes could be found the girls, and the girls were just right. Their attitude was a reassuring combination of desire and reality, competitiveness and common sense: If you are in a contest, you should want to win it; you should try to win it. But if the contest you're in is a cheerleading contest, well, "defeat" is not a life and death matter. Not one of them was about to lock herself in the bathroom. Way to go, Cincinnati.

Sunday was the big night, the finals. Having seen this much of the National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship, I was not about to miss the main event. The place was standing-room-only. The place was hot. The program started late and ran long. More girls messed up; more girls cried. But I counted the evening a great success because the finalists included Cumberland County High School of Burkesville, Kentucky, my mother's hometown. And the winner and champion in the small varsity division was Barren County High School, Glasgow, Kentucky, where I have lots more kin. Way to go, Kentucky.

I don't think I would choose to attend the National Cheerleaders Association's High School Cheerleaders National Championship on a regular basis. It's possible I could get hooked. It's possible I could feel like I was gonna bust. But I'm glad I went this time. I got to see my daughter and her friends do their best and feel good about it. I was able to witness my 14-year-old son's amused and amazed reaction to adolescent femininity en masse. ("They *never* shut up," he said.) I got to watch my husband, easygoing to the point of foolishness, agree to deliver nine McDonald's breakfast orders to the rooms of the Cincinnati cheerleaders. After listening for 10 minutes to everyone talking at once, after hearing such instructions as, "I'll have a large juice—no, a small juice—wait, I'm allergic to

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juice," my husband said, "Just *write* your orders down, and I'll figure things out later." He left the room with nine pieces of paper in his hand. Consistent with the theory that nothing having to do with kids is ever simple, the last slip bore this little brainteaser: "One cinnamon Danish, uncooked." And I had the pleasure of overhearing a Southern girl declare, "I just look ignorant in a T-shirt"—a use of the word "ignorant" I haven't heard since my last visit to Kentucky, a state whose small towns —maybe you've heard?—are now official bastions of high-school cheerleading excellence.

Finally, I got to see an entire smiling family decked out in matching jackets on which were printed in large letters "Chadney's Mom," "Chadney's Dad," "Chadney's Brother," "Chadney's Grandma," and "Chadney's Grandpa." My only disappointment is that I did not get to see the object of this united pride and affection. I hope for her family's sake that she wasn't the girl who locked herself in the ladies' room. If she wasn't, then way to go, Chadney.

Janet Scott Barlow covers popular culture from her home in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Letter From Waterford

by Ivan Helfman

Old Wine Fermenting

One New Age guru still on a roll is Rabbi Sherwin Wine. Twenty-three years ago, before his rise, he was an unbelieving rabbi without a congregation. Known for his willingness to violate Talmudic law by marrying Jews to gentiles, this fall Wine became cochairperson of the International Federation of Secular Humanistic Jews. At the Birmingham Temple, Wine's congregation in Farmington Hills, Michigan, the synod fulfilled his dream of receiving emotional support and legitimacy from his soulmates around the world. The conference, wrote Wine in the December 1986 *Jewish Humanist*, confirmed that the philosophy of the Birmingham Temple was not a bizarre local phenomenon but a movement supported by an international gallery of celebrities, from Haim Cohn to Amos Oz.

Since secular humanism usually disguises itself as a neutral science, the candor of Wine's movement appealed to the Peeping Tom in me. Hanukkah was a day away, providing an opportunity to view Wine conducting a godless holiday service that I could not pass up. I rang up the temple for service times and was told that the building would be closed for the holidays. The congregation ministers to the "mid-winter travel plans of various members." I bided my time reading Wine's book, *Judaism Beyond God*, as well as his other publications, until the tanned brethren returned.

I discovered that the godless religion rejects prayer and worship: Prayer wastes time. When Wine had led prayers, during a stint as a Reform rabbi, nobody upstairs listened. *Judaism Beyond God* considers prayer a psychological kink caused by lingering nursery power-fantasies about the magical ability of baby sounds to procure milk delivery.

In Wine's eyes, worship resembles the appeasement rituals of wolves and is dangerous, irrational, and inappropriate for services. Dangerous because no power is sacred, taboo, or beyond human challenge; irrational because no power requires obsequious honor and devotion. Wine blames ancestor worship for "this bizarre ritual appeasement of invisible powers, immortals, icons, books, and abstract designs." Prayer and worship are replaced by silent meditation—which eliminates prayer books and Torahs from his start-up costs.

I attended an outreach session in early January at the temple, a rectangular brick and glass structure that resembles a suburban medical plaza. The only exterior ornaments were flat wood panels that framed the glass entrance to the large empty lobby. Wine waited for us to find him behind the windows of the cubical library, fidgeting his elbows against the formica tabletop and disparagingly looking over the small turnout. He wore a dark brown wool suit and a matching silk tie, and hogged a table-width to himself.

The pitch was theatrical. Vivid gestures followed the words, palms sweeping the verbal spill off the formica tabletop. While he talked about unseen forces, his pupils dilated and brows lifted: "As secular humanists, we hold four tenets: naturalism, skepticism, consequential ethics and humanism," he said, and went on to explain each tenet well enough for a bubblegum card."

"Can you show me a supernatural being?" he asked, swaying spread palms and smirking.

He spoke of the scientific revolution: "There are no eternal truths, only fleeting objective scientific facts that the scientific method tells us are true. But who knows how long their truth will last in an age of active change or what science will discover tomorrow?"

Moral laws are as obsolete as close extended families. Anything that calls for unthinking submission to authority is unsuited to our individualistic age: "In the century of the Holocaust, we find it unrealistic to depend on a supernatural being for our safety and direction. Humanism, however, affirms the individual's limited but extraordinary abilities."

The human objects of the outreach ask questions: *How do you console the bereaved?*

"Let me tell you what I saw at a *shivva* that turned me completely off. A beautiful 32-year-old woman, in her prime, died in a car accident. The rabbi, a conservative, told the devastated husband, 'Maybe it's for the best.' It was too much to heap this absurdity upon his pain.

"I console people by complimenting them for taking it well and I tell them how much I admire their strength."

How do you tell kids that there is no God?

"You need not waffle because kids don't care," he said. Though afterwards, in private, he told a mixed couple, about to tie the knot, whose kids thought that Wine's services were not for the best, that "Rejecting secular humanism is all part of the process. Be sure to bring them back."

Do you observe any dietary laws?

"No, most of our members are on diets."

I asked, "What are your rituals like? How do you celebrate your holidays? —People's Day, for instance?"

"The few rituals we have are for the

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people. People are not for the rituals.

"People's Day affirms there are other people besides us. It falls November 1st. Children collect for Unicef. The congregation celebrates by singing secular songs, like 'It's a Small World.'"

I asked for a tour of the Temple. Since that was the last question and I was the only one interested, Wine and I soon stood in the service room.

"Notice our flat ceiling; the temple architecture is modern; it's not designed to let heavenly light in," he said.

He ignored my criticism of the pulpit skylight: White Bauhaus glass is not light-proof. Maybe he was right to feel protected against angelic spirits. Only civic spirits were immanent in the service room's blond wood paneling, stainless steel rails, wing-and-tail floorplan, and textured black plastic chairs. It resembles a modern meeting room, designed to accommodate the local school board.

All icons had been removed. No Torah because "We don't believe in the word." But the pulpit was not bare. Upon it stood a logo, a pop art rendering of the Hebrew word for man, "adam" (originally meaning clay), and a Menorah. Not the symbolic Menorah of rabbinical Judaism but one shining with the secular Light of Life, brother to a Rolling Stones' light show.

I returned for a service called "Celebration of Academic Achievement" as well as to observe a pre-service low-cal chicken dinner, served in an oversized Danish living room with sectional sofas and mini-trees in pots. Before calling tables to the buffet, Wine, beaming and waving a slice of egg bread, said a blessing: "We praise the power of life within the world and within each of us," and began a people's eating ritual with "share the bread, pass it around. Behold how good and pleasant it is to be with each other in peace."

Blessing and handing out the bread baskets, the wandering guru seemed different from the sitting missionary. The guru has the girlish amiability of old Yiddish comedians, like Uncle Miltie, who used to perform in drag. Constantly smiling, slightly tilting, he seems ready to chuckle and do a backwards somersault.

The noshers were from Uncle Miltie's generation. The women had neat short haircuts and wore sweaters or knit dresses; though one, an academic achiever, let her long curls fall in improvised movements over a black dress amply riveted with rhinestones. The men, who wore stodgy wools, quietly sliced their chicken into small pieces. I counted five kids and teenagers. I could not tell if couples outnumbered singles, but Secular Humanistic Judaism's future lies outside its reproductive talents.

With many humanists home watching *Dallas* and *Miami Vice*, the spectators sat few and far between. Wine said, "We're a family," and called on everybody to gather together near the pulpit, where he began the service with an explanation of why college degrees are superior to traditional rites of passage like Bar Mitzvahs or confirmations. Next we heard 20 minutes of Wine's pop psychology tips alternating with a soprano duet and piano performance of his musical meditations, like: "In a place where there are no real people/Strive to be a person."

Then came the unexpected. New Age Judaism had been so relentlessly one-dimensional that it seemed powerless to astonish. But, astounded I was when Wine called upon three rational skeptics to answer a question—How does one's commitment to Secular Humanistic Judaism contribute to one's career?—and each, alighted with revival-tent fervor, witnessed the power of humanism to set you free.

The first, a teased-platinum blond predator with a tube of foundation cream on her face, told how her faith in Freudian psychotherapy and two-year submission to its methods unleashed hidden inner powers that enabled her to overcome her doctors' objective scientific prognoses about her ectopic pregnancy and her infertility.

"With humanism, this was within my grasp. My humanistic commitment began a two-year struggle about myself and my milieu. Psychoanalysis taught me how to feel, who I am, that I am responsible for myself, and how to help others.

"As a clinical social worker from a psychoanalytical base, I help my cases find their humanness through their transfer to me. I remain a blank screen for my patients to look deeply into and see their symptoms. I don't offer a

BOOKS IN BRIEF — CULTURE

The Normative Basis of Culture: A Philosophical Inquiry **by Henry McDonald, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.** The term "culture" underlies a great deal of the ground covered by social scientists—anthropologists, sociologists, and historians of religion, especially. Henry McDonald offers a new approach, a "normative theory" which concentrates on norms and values. Two enormous flaws in this approach will strike even the casual reader: First, it is dependent on Wittgenstein's interesting speculations on the nature of language—how can a theory of even a social science be constructed on the basis of another theory, especially one that is largely irrelevant to current research? Second, McDonald completely ignores the one relevant school of thought: cognitive anthropology, a discipline that has attempted, with some success, to do precisely what McDonald proposes. The real mystery is why LSU Press—a very solid academic publisher—should have taken on so dilettantish a manuscript.

The Culture of Criticism and the Criticism of Culture **by Giles Gunn, New York: Oxford University Press; $24.95.** Question: What could be sillier than "cultural criticism" as practiced by Alfred Kazin, Richard Rorty, and Paul de Man? Answer: the criticism of cultural criticism as practiced by Giles Gunn. Gunn does have one virtue: He *knows* things. For example, he knows that "the severity of the current intellectual crisis is not due to the breakdown of conventional moral prescriptions and interdictions, much less to the forgetfulness of the sacred." That is, by the way, one of the few lucid sentences in the work. It is painful to note that the publisher is Oxford University and that portions of this embarrassing book were delivered as lectures at the College of William and Mary, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Colorado.

Poems 1968-1972 **by Denise Levertov, New York: New Directions.** Here's one of the better parts: "OK! Let brutal/Amerikan polizei/and tightassed DAR's be known forever/as pigs and wasps, but let's think up new names for those we ripped off": Levertov, one of the gray old ladies of the avant-garde, concludes her paean to revolutionism with a touching defense of porkers and vespids. Kinda makes one appreciate Allen Ginsberg. If there is a more incompetent—or (what's worse) more prolific—"poet of stature" in the U.S., we'd be delighted to hear about her.

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quick fix like pop psychology. Beginning with the oedipal, I peel my patients apart, layer by layer, like an onion.

"It would be horrible for these people to have to depend on a supreme being."

She ended her testimony with a wildly applauded miracle, "By the way, I had my baby."

"Can you beat that?" began the second witness, a soprano lawyer with small flip-out ears and a goatee. He could not; humanism had only made him an altruistic lawyer and raised him above his peers: "Other lawyers are not good guys," he put it.

The final witness was a frizzy-haired clinical social worker with sagging cheeks and thick lips and a fetus-like body, who told another tale of human might in the teeth of scientific fact. Her heroine was one of her patients, an 85-year-old woman who would not allow a doctor near her. "When I asked, 'Would you like an appointment,' she replied, 'No. Twenty years ago the doctors told me that I would soon be dead.'

"She never saw a physician again, and lived a beautiful life. Listening to her case history, my tears flowed. I learned that seniors have feelings too.

"Now I work as a pregnancy counselor at a clinic, where women must make decisions. My humanistic training helps me reach out to my patients and tell them that the light is within, that the answers are in themselves."

The happy rabbi called on all members of the flock who earned diplomas in 1986 to march up onto the pulpit and light the Menorah. After replacing the torch, each lightbearer rushed to Wine for a Sammy Davis Jr. hug and kiss—he might have been Robert Schuller.

Ivan Helfman is a journalist in the Detroit area.

Letter From Fort Worth

by Hamilton H. Howze

Pork Politics

"There is no distinctly native American criminal class, except Congress."
—Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar

Mark Twain, responsible for the foregoing, was being funny. His remark, however, is steadily becoming a little more true and a little less funny.

The U.S. Congress, through indirection and guile rather than by overt vote, has managed to give itself a pay raise. The national press, for once anxious to establish itself as really patriotic, reasonable, and fair, has in most part agreed that the heavy responsibilities of congressmen merit the additional compensation.

What nobody seems to acknowledge, however, is that neither businessmen nor professionals command their salaries according to their responsibilities but according to how well they meet them. If a company executive officer doesn't do his job right he gets sacked or demoted. Not so a congressman—providing he plays the political game right, he's there, forever.

Though most Texans have held Senator Lloyd Bentsen in high regard, he has been discovered to preside over a breakfast club whose individual membership tab of $10,000 went into his reelection fund. The senator has admitted a mistake—but of what? Of committing a gross impropriety or of failing to conceal the club's existence? As it is, the club has been disbanded. Senator Robert Bird, the Majority Leader, on the other hand, is less sensitive, keeping his breakfast club intact, its membership fee a paltry $5,000.

How many other congressmen maintain breakfast clubs, and at what cost to the members, we are not told. But apparently the device is not an uncommon one in our Congress.

And who are those who belonged, or belong, to these breakfast clubs? It is safe to assume that they are persons who want, for reasons worth more than $5,000-$10,000, to talk at leisure to an official of great influence in the government. Their belief in the possibility of getting, for their money, government action favorable to them or their companies must be exceptional. I don't know what the legal distinction might be, but to a layman that sounds like the prostitution of influence and power.

What is the chance of an ordinary citizen getting the careful individual attention of such a senator or representative? Unless he is a friend or a person of unusual wealth, importance, or influence, the prospect is a mighty slim one. Even a written request would in all probability be answered by a staffer or by a form letter. After all, a congressman is deluged by scores, maybe hundreds, of calls and letters every day and cannot even think of giving each one his personal attention. But not so for the breakfast club member.

But we were really talking about pay. A conscientious, smart, and courageous congressman, capable of distinguishing right from wrong and understanding geopolitical realities as well as the needs of American society, is worth more than any of them get. There are, fortunately, a considerable number of such congressmen, an example being the recently deceased Washington Democrat Henry Jackson. Jackson was properly conscious of the requirements of his constituents, but his knowledge of world affairs enabled him to balance one consideration with the other.

We should ask ourselves, what is Congress for? It may sound a bit simplistic, but I should say its principal purpose is to represent the people in the enactment or modification of legislation necessary for the administration (a) to protect the country; (b) to govern the country properly; and (c) to manage the country's foreign affairs. But whatever one's personal definition of the function of Congress, it seems logical that performance, not simple responsibility, should determine congressional pay raises.

If Congress were meeting its responsibilities, this country would not be suffering from many of its long-standing, long-unresolved problems. As we all know, it took the Congress nine years to come up with ineffectual legislation to curb the flood of illegal immigration across our southern border. The House of Representatives is

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discussing drug control legislation which, for lack of sufficiently severe penalties for drug traffickers, has no possibility of solving the terrible drug problem. Congress has recently enacted, over the President's veto, a "water quality" act recently characterized by James J. Kilpatrick as a bureaucratic monstrosity, meant to benefit individual congressmen. Left altogether unsolved by the Congress are such crucial problems as the national debt, the budget deficit, the burgeoning crime rate, widespread pornography, an inadequate system of education, increasing poverty (despite the billions of dollars spent for its eradication), as well as the creation, through the neglect of children, of ever larger generations of welfare recipients.

Congressmen sometimes blame the inadequacies of existing law on the interpretations of the Constitution by the Supreme Court. This charge is justified, but is there no solution? Must this democracy fail to operate properly on that account? The Constitution includes provisions for its own amendment, an admittedly long and a complicated process, but good government may demand that this process be again set in motion. It is hard to believe the Founding Fathers intended to establish a government incapable of operating for the good of its people.

Hamilton H. Howze is a retired general of the U.S. Army living in Fort Worth, Texas.

Letter From Albion

by Andrei Navrozov

The Oxford Experience

The recent election of the new Chancellor of Oxford University—or was it the prospect of another July undisturbed by fireworks?—reminded me of the letter I received from a Cambridge friend last summer, when I was living in Oxford. I quote it with minor deletions.

"Warm greetings to the Latin Quarter of Morris-Cowley, and happy Fourth of July. I hope you are celebrating. My own preference lies more with the Third than the Fourth of July, for I think it more American to be preparing for tomorrow than to celebrate yesterday. Nonetheless, I shall both prepare and celebrate next week if you tell me that you are coming to Cambridge, which you should do.

"According to Vladimir Nabokov, who came up in 1919 by way of the Crimea and Greece, the residual property of Cambridge, 'which many a solemn alumnus has tried to define,' is the constant awareness one has 'of an untrammelled extension of time.' The same feeling did not escape me at Oxford, so I attribute the difference between the two to other things. Henry James maintained that 'a stray savage is not in the least obliged to know the difference,' but a difference there is, and I am curious to hear what Andrei Navrozov will make of it.

"My views on the matter are definite. No amount of development will ever make of Cambridge more than a village, whereas Oxford is a steamy industrial Gehenna between 9 and 5. Oxford without Oxford would still be Oxford, but Cambridge without Cambridge would be nothing. In fact, for us of the gown and for them of the town, Cambridge is *everything*. This is not to conclude, by extension, since they are indeed different, that Oxford is *nothing*. In fact, we are quite willing to concede that Oxford is *something*. But what? I think it typical of the uncertainty in that question that one should see everywhere the signs of Oxford trying to prove that she, like Cambridge, is also everything. What else could account for the unseemly phenomenon that greets one's eyes on walking into any bookshop. *The Oxford Book of Science*, *The Oxford Book of Art*, *The Oxford Book of Edible Funghi*, *Tudor Carols*, *Quechua Verse* . . . *The Oxford Book of Oxford*! I was told that there were even plans for *The Oxford Book of Cambridge*, but that this was discarded as giving the game away. My dear Andrei, it is as if God had given us the Universe, and created Oxford to keep track of it. Which is just as well, for had he given it to Cambridge it would have been returned as either unnecessary, insufficient, absurd, or much too flashy. Whence undoubtedly proceeds the opinion that at Oxford people walk in the street looking as if they owned it, whereas at Cambridge they walk in the street looking as if they didn't care who owned it. . . .

"But do come and participate in these delights. I shall try to arrange nice weather."

The stability of the Oxonocentric universe was put to the test in March as Roy Jenkins, described by my vitriolic Sussex friend Martin Seymour-Smith as "a claret-swilling sentimentalist," became the university's new chancellor. The four-way election was bitterly contested, greatly politicized, and widely publicized, with Lord Blake (who would have been endorsed by this magazine's editors had they not been too busy clearing the intellectual swamp in the colonies) pitted against Edward Heath (the "wet" Conservative Prime Minister deposed by Thatcher), Mark Payne (a 34-year-old "alternative candidate" who displayed his campaign poster reading "Ecce Marcus Payne: Eligendus Est" outside the Sheldonian), and Jenkins (founder, with David Owen and others, of the SDP and a former Labor "minister of sanitation or something like that," as Seymour-Smith remembered it). With thousands of alumni converging on Oxford, Castell's, the High Street tailor, had an "unprecedented" run on gowns, selling out of its £55 model in synthetic fiber and only a few in Russell cord (£99) or pure wool (£125) remaining. The Randolph Hotel was fully booked, its restaurant (as the maître d' was reported to have put it) "full of sirs and lords." *The Sunday Times* ran a *sententia* in Latin.

Yet what, in reality, is Oxford? Perhaps to capitalize on the enormous election publicity, Oxford University Press began bringing out its ubiquitous "Oxford Books" in paperback, "at less than a fiver each," and I would like to use the remaining space to review the first four arrivals: *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, *The Oxford Book of Dreams*, *The Oxford Book of Death*, and *The Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes*. OUP may not be Oxford, but it too has a "genuine" Gothic facade.

Vasily Rozanov, perhaps the subtlest of all Russian writers, once counted 20 overshoes in the hall of his flat, concluding with pride that he was able to feed 10 mouths, "including servants," by his thoughts alone. Rozanov, who is quoted twice in *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*—compared with 17 times for Anatole France and

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10 for Sigmund Freud—abhorred the very notion of "literature" and never wrote anything but "thoughts." To suppose that the Western reader, considerably less aware of this writer's achievement in 1987 than he was in 1929, when 750 copies of *Fallen Leaves* were published by James Stephens at the Mandrake Press, may notice and understand two of Rozanov's thoughts served up as "aphorisms" is sheer folly. In the pages of *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, the obscure are doomed to obscurity.

Freud, on the other hand, is a "famous name" whose prominence in a book such as this is *ipso facto* assured. "The principal task of civilisation," runs one of the good doctor's apothegms, "is to defend us against nature." Startling, is it not? One suspects that the same quotation will some day delight the readers of *The Oxford Book of Nature*, *The Oxford Book of Civilization*, and *The Oxford Book of Tasks*, among other useful compilations OUP may be contemplating. Likewise, Anatole France need not worry: Even if OUP decides to bring out a frankly commercial title like *The Oxford Book of Sex*, a line or two of his, no matter how trite, will doubtless be included. For instance: "Of all sexual aberrations, chastity is the strangest."

Even if not motivated by misplaced commercial considerations, OUP's obsessive anthologizing borders on the absurd. If one likes Wordsworth, one has certainly read *The Prelude* and need not buy *The Oxford Book of Dreams* to savour "the language of the dream" which the poet learned at Cambridge. If one dislikes Wordsworth, finding the relevant passage categorized as "Travel and the Natural World" under the rubric "Earthly Things," next to the rather enigmatic "Gladness of mind shows that you will live abroad" from *The Oneirocriticon* by Astrampsychus, c. A.D. 350, will probably do little to change one's mind. For whom, then, are these books?

There are, to be sure, writers so quotable their *oeuvre* begs to be parceled into small lots: One thinks of Wilde, La Bruyère, Karl Kraus, and five or six others. (Even so, why not read them, as it were, "in the original"?) But Proust? William James? George Herbert? Surely, to gouge out of the body of Dostoevsky's work an "aphorism" like "The formula 'two and two make five' is not without its attractions" is a senseless act of editorial brutality. It is all the more painful to see such acts committed with the sole aim of "popularizing" a variety of readily available cultural commodities.

D.J. Enright is a brilliant anthologist by divine vocation, as well as one of the most amusing writers around, but even he seems unable to breathe life into *The Oxford Book of Death*. Yet here, at least, the editor's introductions to each of the chapters, if not the book itself, may be well worth the cover price. Finally, there is *The Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes*. Its premise is clear, its contents suitably highbrow, and those who feel the need to enliven their conversation during the evening commute to Tunbridge Wells would certainly do better telling stories about famous writers than intimidating their companions with all those aphorisms, dreams, and thoughts of death.

Andrei Navrozov is poetry editor of Chronicles.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

The Forsyth Saga

You may recall last January's events in Forsyth County, Georgia, when a newly arrived Californian announced his presence by attempting to organize a march in Cumming, the county seat, to honor Martin Luther King. That bait wouldn't tempt an undiscriminating catfish, but a few of the local old boys rose to it anyway, displaying once again the simplicity that is one of their simultaneously endearing and infuriating traits. Although the threats they proceeded to issue were transparently less sincere than those directed the previous month at the president of the University of Alabama when he engaged the services of a football coach with a less than awesome win-loss record, they were

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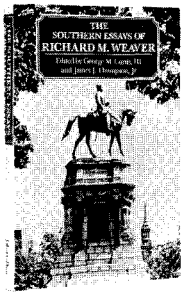

THE SOUTHERN ESSAYS OF RICHARD M. WEAVER

Foreword by George Core
Edited with Preface by George M. Curtis, III and James J. Thompson, Jr.

Richard M. Weaver (1910-1963) was one of the leading figures in the post World War II development of an intellectual, self-conscious conservatism, and his most important and widely cited book, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, 1948), is still in print.

Weaver's appreciation of liberty was rooted in his understanding of Southern history. This collection of fourteen of Weaver's essays on the South and Southern history is presented in demonstration of George Core's point that "few critics of the South rival Richard Weaver in comprehensiveness of vision and depth of thought. . . ."

Among the essays included are "Lee the Philosopher" (1948), "Agrarianism in Exile" (1950), "The Tennessee Agrarians" (1952), "The South and the American Union" (1957), and "Two Types of Individualism" (1963).

George M. Curtis, III is Professor of History at Hanover College and James J. Thompson, Jr., is Book Review Editor of *The New Oxford Review*.

266 + xxii pages. Foreword, preface, acknowledgments, index.
Hardcover $10.00 0-86597-057-2
Paperback $ 4.50 0-86597-058-0
Liberty Fund edition, 1987

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enough to persuade the newcomer to cancel his planned march.

Now, many of us think folks ought to be able to march for any damn-fool reason they please or none at all. One Forsythian who felt that way, a white man named Dean Carter, said *he* was going to march, with his family, whereupon the threats got a little more serious. Carter, too, had second thoughts, at which point the Reverend Hosea Williams, a veteran of the civil rights movement now an Atlanta city councilman, heard what was happening and showed up with 75 marchers. Williams' party was met with bottles and rocks thrown by a mob of 400 (most of them Klansmen, according to the newspapers), and the fat was in the fire.

The next week, Williams was back with more than 15,000 marchers (as many as 4,000 more were left in Atlanta, 40 miles south, because there weren't enough buses for them). A number of speakers addressed the marchers on the general subject of the unrighteousness of Forsyth County (which does have an undeniably sordid past). This time about a thousand counterdemonstrators showed up, many of them from out-of-state, but there was no violence: The march's critics stuck to shouting insults and making obscene gestures. Everybody went home and the media settled down to tell us what it all meant. (The next week, the whole business dissolved into farce as Williams insisted on going to jail because Oprah Winfrey wouldn't let him on her television program.)

The national media seemed torn. Some wanted to treat both this affair and the New York City lynching that took place about the same time as signs of resurgent white racism, somehow adding up to an indictment of the Reagan administration. Others, I suspect, saw the Forsyth County episode as a welcome return to tradition, with white racism back in the Deep South where it belongs—and what a relief not to have to think about Howard Beach any more. Either way, most observers treated the event as (in the *Wall Street Journal*'s words) "an old-fashioned civil-rights march."

But, of course, an *old-fashioned* civil rights march is the last thing it was. (If you wanted to see one of those, you could have watched a splendid PBS documentary series, *Eye on the Prize*, that debuted just as all this was happening.) For starters, the odds had changed, radically. The rabble opposing the march were wise to stay nonviolent: They were outnumbered not only 15-to-1 by the marchers, but also better than 2-to-1 by the law. And added to the usual celebrities—Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, Dick Gregory, Gary Hart (briefly, but long enough to find a television camera)—were two very significant ones: both of Georgia's U.S. senators.

But the big story, it seems to me, was that even many white Georgians without presidential aspirations were sympathetic—although the networks, the wire services, the major newspapers, *Time*, and *Newsweek* seem largely to have ignored that fact. (OK, I didn't see them all; the ones I saw ignored it.) For that angle, I'm indebted to a college reporter with the honesty and good sense to write his story *after* he went to Cumming: Rocky Rosen, of the Duke University *Chronicle*.

I haven't seen a geographical breakdown on the marchers themselves, but most of those who talked to Rosen seem to have been Georgians. Certainly most of the marchers were white, and Hosea Williams had the grace to notice. Rosen quoted him: "There is not a more important moment in the history of America than today," said Williams in his speech (perhaps exaggerating just a little bit). "We never had a demonstration, from Montgomery to Memphis, that got more white folks out there standing up for justice than black folks." Rosen also noticed the "Cumming residents, mostly elderly, [who] waved to the march from inside their homes," and reported that the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners welcomed the marchers with a banner across the parade route and a full-page advertisement in the *Atlanta Journal*. Did you read about that in your newspaper?

Now, I don't want to go overboard. Those hateful counterdemonstrators were there, and not all of them were outside agitators. Maybe the banner and newspaper ad reflected merely the Board of Commissioners' fear that all this fuss is bad for business. If so, it would be in what is now an old Georgia tradition, pioneered by Atlanta, "the city too busy to hate."

Nevertheless, what went on in Cumming wasn't the relatively simple story that we saw repeated time and again in the early 1960's. The new story may be dramaturgically less satisfying, and it's harder to tell in 90 seconds on television, but it's a story that, on balance, strikes me the way it struck Hosea Williams, as *good* news.

By coincidence, at just about the same time all this was happening, *Rolling Stone* carried an interview with the immortal Bo Diddley, who had just been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Bo wasn't talking about Forsyth County, but he could have been. After answering a question about the hard times he had faced as a black performer in the Jim Crow South, he observed:

> It's different now. The people down here in the South now is got their s--- together. Everybody's fine; everybody gets along beautiful, and I'm so happy that that's what happened. But you can always find a fool—you can find a fool in *church*, you understand?

If everyone had Brother Diddley's true, fine sense of proportion, our national conversation would be healthier. Of course, the nation's op-ed pages would be emptier.

John Shelton Reed used to work as a disc jockey at WMCH, "your good neighbor station in Church Hill, Tennessee."

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

Where the Action Is

Between now and the turn of the century, 16 eastern and southeastern states will celebrate 200 years of statehood. Here in the hinterlands, seven more states will have their 100th birthday. Then there will be just five state centennials left, with Alaska and Hawaii as late desserts in 2059—when many East Coast states will be close to

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300 years old. Every day, in the midst of what some people persist in calling a recession, states, cities, and counties throw restraint to the winds and give themselves exuberant birthday parties. Why?

One answer could be that such celebrations are good for us. State governments, strapped for money, can't vote much into state centennial commission coffers, especially here in the Upper Midwest where our tax base is falling. Somehow, though, the beat goes on. Businesspeople who can tie sales and special products to the festivities, and artists and arts organizations who, for once, can rely on emotional impetus to guarantee sales of centennial books and paintings, are the ones who really profit from a huge centennial blowout. During local celebrations, real people and businesses always seem to do better than amorphous government "entities" (makes government sound like either a god or a ghost). Community anticipation is easily sustained for several years before the event, and then there's a whole 12 months of partying, where people buy, on impulse, things they ordinarily wouldn't touch.

But this urge to acquire souvenirs only points to the real motive behind a big local celebration: At home, in our states and towns, we're all we have left—and proud of it.

This feeling is stronger for adults than for uninitiated teens, who love the glamour of national media blitzes and attend corny local centennial events smirking self-consciously—but always attend. (The importance of initiation becomes clear when we think of fraternal lodge celebrations, where other townspeople, wives, and kids —i.e., those who know none of the secrets—aren't even invited, yet the air is thick with brotherhood.) For grown-ups, the most touching advertising, at least for community events, is local, clumsy, and aimed not at hammering community spirit into people but at directing that spirit which is assumed to be there.

A glitzy national celebration can't come close to moving us this way; the Statue of Liberty gala was something we *watched*—if we happened to be at home. Even heartfelt patriotism is different from a love of community, at least in this country (in some parts of Europe they're almost the same thing, or used to be). We love America as we love anything vast and splendid: broadly, with broad disregard for its flaws. But cheap talk about "the important governing role of the American people" notwithstanding, we also know that the American people don't carry much weight in Washington. We are 240 million individuals at the mercy of a distant Congress and Supreme Court and President we don't *know*, have never been to coffee or a potluck supper with. Let's face it—our cards and calls to Washington, and even our votes, really *don't* make much difference unless there are thousands of them. Washington would like to be America's brains and conscience, and it has High Principles on its mind, not us here trying to lead commonplace lives.

By the nature of things, we are allowed instead to define the character of our locale, to watch our state or town change—or be saved from change—by our efforts. The new library? I helped to vote it into reality. Blue laws, pornography laws, Sunday liquor, taxes, parks, the election of legislators to our modest assembly: My vote counts in all these instances. Those in my group are like me, family. A local or state centennial or bicentennial is just a family birthday party.

Across America, states, towns, and counties are throwing parties for themselves, happy in spite of those Washington hooligans. The turn of the century casts its shadow back across us, as soothsayers try to guess what life will be like on the other side of that great imaginary divide. All we know, here, at home, with friends and family, is that we're not getting older, we're getting *better*, with each celebration. Perhaps as states we *can* enlighten the District of Columbia—or force it to secede.

Jane Greer is writing a long elegy on the brief life of Dakota Beer.

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POP CULTURE

Fillet of Soul

by Gary S. Vasilash

Entertainment industry awards shows are, almost by definition, public orgies of televised backslapping. Still, TV viewers stick with them, not so much to discover what the best movie, TV show, or record is—for each viewer already knows what's best—but in order to see personalities in environments that put them out of character and in competition with other celebrities. During, say, the telecast of the Miss America pageant, there's no panning the audience. But during an awards show, audience shots are often a highlight of the presentation.

These thoughts were engendered by a viewing of the Dick Clark-produced American Music Awards. The AMA (and let there be no confusion with the medical organization—although the aid of a few physicians could have been helpful to an industry suffering from outsized egos) has been around for 14 years. It's not quite the Grammys. Still, it had a contingent of performers that will rival the show that results in little gold stickers on album jackets.

This year's hostess was Diana Ross. Diana has gone from being the lead singer in a popular soul trio to a lonely mainstream voice looking for a style. In her opening number, Ross spent an inordinate amount of time with her skirt being blown up around her waist a la Marilyn Monroe in *The Seven Year Itch*. Later in the show, Ross did a tribute to Billie Holliday, whom she portrayed several years ago in *Lady Sings the Blues*. Perhaps some day Ross will play herself as a member of the Supremes, which is the best thing she could do, next to retiring.

The entertainment segments between the presentations were, by and large, so poorly done that it is amazing to think that the entertainers would be willing to put up with such shoddiness. American automakers aren't the only ones with quality problems. For example, Robert Palmer, the man who spent over a decade making good music and being ignored, performed his "hit single" "I Didn't Mean to Turn You On." Palmer wasn't singing; only his lips were moving. Even he seemed embarrassed. Janet Jackson, who resembles brother Michael to a degree that brings cloning or cross-dressing to mind, also did a lip sync, but in her case, there was so much aerobic dancing involved that no one would have wanted to hear her huffing and puffing, anyway. The best live performance came from the country side of the awards triumverate (i.e., pop-rock, soul-rhythm & blues, and country), with the likes of George Strait and the Judds. The Judds' performance of Presley's "Don't Be Cruel"—part of a ceremony marking the 10th year since the passing of the King—had the Jordanaires, El's backup singers, standing mute behind Wynona and Naomi. I think they wished they were somewhere else.

But there were more fundamental problems to the AMA. As one who grew up in Motown, it is difficult to watch Diana rise only to mediocrity and to hear Marvin Gaye praised for such trivialities as "Sexual Healing" (cf. "Ain't That Peculiar"). What is worse is that the music industry seems incapable of defining the differences between pop-rock and soul-R&B. It's really not that tough to hear the difference. For example, when the late Otis Redding did "(Sittin' on the) Dock of the Bay," that was what would now be called a pop-rock song. Lionel Richie could have—and may have—patterned himself after that. Virtually all the rest of Redding's music is soul-R&B. James Brown also continues to create soul-R&B. The test is whether the music can cause even a tone-deaf listener to break out in a cold sweat.

Perhaps it is the effect of the late, unlamented Great Disco Boom of the late 70's. Former soul-R&B performers found that they could reach a bigger audience through the disco sound, which translated into record sales. When the boom became a bust, these performers had to take the edge off of their music if they were going to retain their mass appeal. This should not be considered a phenomenon restricted simply to soul singers hustling after the disposable income of the mainstream white middle class. In much the same way, there were (and are) the country music crossovers, including Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, and Kenny Rogers.

But at least the country contingent at the AMA kept its ranks in order. Perennial favorites Alabama and the new dynamic duo, The Judds, picked up their share of plexiglass pyramids.

But consider these results. In the pop-rock category, the favorite album was "Whitney Houston" by Whitney Houston; the favorite female vocalist was Whitney; the favorite video single was "Dancing on the Ceiling" by Lionel Richie; Lionel was also named favorite male vocalist. Meanwhile, over in the soul-R&B area we find

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these results: favorite album, "Whitney Houston"; favorite video single, "Greatest Love of All" by Whitney Houston; favorite female vocalist, Whitney; favorite male video artist, Lionel Richie; and, outrageously enough, to borrow a turn of phrase from Mr. Richie, he also picked up the favorite male vocalist award. Of the total 18 awards given in the combined pop-rock and soul-R&B categories, those two received nine.

This is not a case of enlightened liberal listening by those who determine the winners. It is, rather, evidence that we may be losing the soul-R&B form to a type of music with all the edge of a slug of Maalox.

Presently, we have Tina Turner back, though it's her Rod Stewart-inspired hairdo and still-extraordinary legs that put her where she is (but where are the Ikettes?). Even Aretha Franklin is being recycled as something other than she once was; I'm awaiting—with fear—a duet with Phil Collins.

Perhaps the lyric on a 1980 Steely Dan tune, "Hey Nineteen," an ironic examination of rapid intergenerational changes, best sums up my position vis-à-vis the eviseration of soul:

> Hey Nineteen / That's 'Retha Franklin / She don't remember / The Queen of Soul / It's hard times befallen / The sole survivors / She thinks I'm crazy / But I'm just growing old. (Becker and Fagen)

Gary Vasilash is editor of Production *magazine.*

ART

Notes on Art Restoration: The Sistine Chapel

by Thomas Molnar

The present controversy around the restoration of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling prompts the following reflections on restorative work in general, and that of our time in particular.

Our age will be known by future historians as one in which all certitudes were questioned, while the True and the Good were on the defensive. Beauty, also tottering, still rallies the largest number of enthusiasts. The onslaughts against it—tasteless monuments, purposeful wrecks in metal and cement in public parks, puzzles on museum and exhibit walls—are violently resented by lovers of art, at least those bold enough to go against popular approval. The restoration work on ancient masterpieces also begins to attract attention because of its increasing abuse.

Paul Valéry spoke of civilizations being mortal; we are now aware that the art of the past, safe from "death," is nevertheless vulnerable to cleansing, the use of new chemicals, to the indiscriminate removal of layers on painting, to retouching, as well as the search for the alleged original lines and colors. Although motivated by good intentions, many restorers are tempted to play the demiurge and "know better" than the work's creator, whether Leonardo, Rembrandt, or Michelangelo. The trouble is that misapplied zeal carries them away, as restorers become competitors against the artist whose work they ought to serve. This is how we get statements like: "Emotional and subjective considerations must not be permitted to intrude upon science!" This by Gianluigi Colalucci, chief restorer now working on the Sistine Chapel.

Before anything else, a cultural misunderstanding should be dispelled: The great masterpieces are not embodied only in the work themselves, as they appear, localized and dated. They have also evolved a life of their own during the centuries or millennia, since their coming into existence. The "search for the original" is merely a modern prejudice, although it may look like a reasonable and an attractive notion to which we all are impelled, partly by curiosity, partly by the desire to meet the *illo tempore*. Yet, this search may also be an ill-conceived enterprise, considering the probability that the artist himself foresaw the effect of *passing time*, and would be the first to protest against a periodic return to an increasingly hypothetical "original," or to what his work was like in the exact moment he put down his brush or chisel.

Each gothic cathedral was built over the decades, indeed centuries, by successive patrons, master-masons, teams of architects and workers. It was the common religious inspiration of merging centuries that created unity of conception and style, not this or that master. Appropriately, no one individual signed the work—the final product may not have exactly conformed to the first blueprint. Similarly, Michelangelo planned the *lunettes* and the barrel vault ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to serve as transcendent inspiration at religious ceremonies for many centuries. He knew that what popes and priests would see when looking up and around would not be quite the same in the second decade of the 16th century as in remote future times and generations. More concretely, he knew that there would be the chemical reactions in his materials compounded by candle smoke, the breathing of multitudes, and the climatic and seasonal changes.

What Michelangelo could not know—in contrast to us—is that taste not only changes but may also one day be so corrupted that it would try to erase *time*. Watch indeed the contemporary infatuation with hermeneutics—in plain language the search for hidden motives (like "investigative journalism" in Washington): What did the writer, artist, scholar, thinker *really* want to express? Did he know exactly what he wanted, was he aware that it was not he who wanted it, but his social class, degree of wealth, his race, his hidden interests, the structure of the language he spoke? The game around the "masters of suspicion" fascinates our contemporaries, the Merleau-Pontys, the Gadamers, the Freuds, the Ricoeurs. Was Shakespeare Shakespeare? Did Leonardo paint a self-portrait under the features of Mona Lisa? And now: Was Michelangelo responsible only for the fresco painted on the walls, while an unknown super-Michelangelo painted, decades later, the musculature, the gradation of light and shadow, the wrestling of God and man?

The theory about this mysterious Other, which in a way authorizes the present restorers to erase perceived non-Michelangellian layers and layers

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of grime, is flatly contradicted by art-chronicler number one, Giorgio Vasari, the painter's contemporary. When in Rome, Vasari writes, Michelangelo painted every day, rain or shine, in great discomfort from constantly looking up. He remained on his 60-foot-high scaffolding night or day, eating and sleeping there, "but in the ardor of labor he felt no fatigue and cared for no discomfort." More, he talked back to the pope (Julius II, no namby-pamby, or a "Hamlet"), who threatened to have him cast down if he did not finish the job by the agreed date. "I shall finish," Michelangelo replied, "when I am satisfied in my artistic sense." And so he did.

All this explains why a work of art today (this is also true of music as new instruments are invented) is not quite the same as it was in its creator's atelier, when it was blessed by qualities of survival. Time does effect some erosion and decrepitude, but it also brings maturation. Most importantly, not every age should regard itself as competent to restore great art. One thing is to rebuild baroque Dresden after its barbaric destruction, quite another to meddle with the wear and tear of centuries. Contemporary taste, working with surviving original blueprints of public buildings, streets, or facades, cannot do much harm; but looking at the Sistine frescoes *before* and *after*, we become painfully aware that contemporary taste favors the style of posters, large, brutally colored surfaces, geometric designs. The tourist wants to see quickly and superficially and carry home a bundle of snapshots. In the Sistine Chapel where he dislocates his neck in the effort to look upward (this, the crowds of tourists, not even a Michelangelo could foresee), the restorers may have wished —am I guilty of hermeneutics?—to alleviate the neckbreaking exercise. At any rate, the cleansed sections appear splashy, ready to be seen from a distance.

Is this still Michelangelo? That is a hard question to answer. Art critic Alexander Eliot, mural painter Frank Mason, Prof. James Beck of Columbia, art dealer Roland Feldman, plus the 15 most prominent American painters who signed a letter of protest to the Vatican, agree that the present restoration is guilty of what I would call "puritanism," the earlier-mentioned impulse to erase time. To which the chief theoretician of the Sistine restoration, Fabrizio Mancinelli, answered that Michelangelo, a Florentine, was trained in the rapid work that the fresco painting demands. Since the fresco dried in one day ("*giornata*"), the artist could move on to the next. The answer to this argument is that Michelangelo was working in Rome (he even rejected advice by his fellow Florentines who had come to visit him) in whose damp and marshy air he knew he had to use another technique and paint slowly, repeatedly, devotedly, expressing his real vision *a secco*. This view of the matter also prevailed with such art historians as Heinrich Wölfflin and Bernard Berenson. The fresco was only a working outline, the struggle of genius was superadded. There is proof, even outside Vasari's description, that the master worked slowly, with a light attached to his hat, "his loins penetrating to his paunch"—these are his own words—"his rump a crupper as a counterweight." He painted over and over, reworked, and in the process he renewed Renaissance painting. How are we to conclude that this daring man would have been content with bare sketches, that he would have refrained from his titanic struggle with angels, saints, sibyls, and prophets?

Let us repeat that the times are not propitious for large-scale restoration except when mere technical know-how is involved, as in the protection of the Parthenon. And our times are not propitious for restoration because they are not creative times. Our contemporaries believe in nothing—how could they think along the lines of great creators, whose art, no matter how perfected, was in their minds only a reflection of the divine? There is something typical and symbolic, certainly not incongruous, in the fact that the restoration is partly paid for by the Nippon Television Network Corporation (three million dollars), in exchange for rights to film the process. Commercialism does not just mix here with beauty and spirituality, it obscenely interferes with both, while strengthening the Restorers' Faction. Let's face it, the latter have the support of an international pressure group of museum directors heavily engaged in restorations (the art must shine to attract visitors and donors, mustn't it?), are critics, professors, publishers. True, the opponents too constitute a faction, except that they are ill-favored by the *zeitgeist*.

A compromise? Perhaps; slow work, frequent interruptions in order to survey the effects before they became irreversible. One illustration: Restoration on Leonardo's *Last Supper* in Milan is planned to take 12 years; the much vaster Sistine Chapel is supposed to be completed in the same amount of time. There is an evident rush. Yet, why should the domain of beauty not also be subject to moral prudence? Moral prudence combined with aesthetic reverence would reassure those who want not only to restore, but also to preserve.

Thomas Molnar is a visiting professor of religious studies at Yale University.

One Week in the Life of the World of Art

by Robin Weisman

Sunday, March 29. On the eve of Christie's auction, Brian Sewell writes in *The Sunday Times Magazine* of Van Gogh's intention to frame his *Sunflowers* series in slender wooden slats painted bright orange "to set the siennas, cinnabars, and ochres dancing." *The Observer* predicts that the painting will "reach at least £10 million" in frenzied bidding. Putting this in a contemporary contest, Peter Watson compares the sum with the prices paid for artists' works in the past. In 1836, 1,600 guineas for *Madonna and Child* by Sebastiano del Piombo, equivalent to £1,647,957 in today's currency; in 1895, 8,500 guineas for Constable's *Young Waltonians* (£63,329,950); in 1930, $1,084,953 for Rembrandt's *Woman Holding a Pink* (£4,724,578); in 1970, £2,320,000 for Velazquez's *Juan de Pareja* (£14,198,400). In other words, No Biggie.

Elsewhere in the Sunday papers, it

(continued on page 50)

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Conditional Freedom

Luddites were not the only workers pining for the good old days of medieval manufacture. The guild system, with its devotion to craftsmanship and stringent regulations, appealed to many early socialists and unionists, such as William Morris, the Knights of Labor, *et al.*, in America. As Howard Dickman chronicles in his *Industrial Democracy in America* (La Salle, IL: Open Court), the old view of economy as a self-fulfilling endeavor took a long time to disappear.

Though the feudal concern with quality quickly gave way to the bourgeois obsession with quantity, some things remained constant. "The work rules of the guild system," writes Dickman of the 14th century, "are strikingly reminiscent of modern union featherbedding practices and jurisdictional disputes. . . . Shoemakers (or as they used to be called, cordwainers) were not supposed to *repair* shoes, which was reserved for the cobblers. Drapers cut cloth for one use, shearmen and tailors cut and sewed garments; at one point, the bakers of white bread were not allowed to bake black bread!"

If the dictatorship of work has been viewed as unpleasant rather than inescapable, we may thank everyone who ever put pen to paper. After all, nature doesn't write, whereas writers, for all their philosophizing, contemplate upon nature. "The ideal of trade unionism," wrote John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers in the 1930's (quoted by Dickman), is "the ideal of two separate, strong, self-respecting and mutually respecting parties, freely contracting with each other, and with no limitations upon this right of perfect and absolute freedom of contract, save that which a community in its wisdom may determine necessary for its own protection." Ideally, Mitchell may have a point, but his absolutes, in each and every instance mocking the grim reality of this world, have yet to turn any industrial plant into an amusement park.

Throughout a large portion of his book, Dickman deals with the evolution of the concept of contract, so highly regarded by Mitchell. Initially a pledge of honor, to develop into a legal exercise in bad faith, the contract had become just another incantation. From the insecurity of 19th-century industrialization, we have stepped into the unpredictability of 20th-century innovation, and unions are searching for controls.

Yet, as Dickman implies, medieval understanding of a society as a corporate system, or an organism, may have been much closer to the truth than Marx's (or Adam Smith's) representation of it as an arena.

Commenting upon industrial democracy (and inadvertently upon democracy in general) Walter G. Merrit of the 1930's employers' League for Industrial Rights said, "I think this majority rule comes pretty nearly to the idea with which Mr. Mussolini originally started, in effect if you got a bare plurality the other party is rooted out. It would be almost like saying that our Senate must be made exclusively of Democrats." What Merrit was talking about was the right of the unions to dictate the conditions to nonunion workers, but euphemisms were ever on hand to explain privilege, in this case that of union members, as the general public good.

To anyone who's ever tried to get into a closed shop or a union, or who wondered what made his labor worth only a third of a union member's, Dickman's book is an indispensable reader. Television reportage of strikes for "job security" notwithstanding (who guarantees the employers *their* job security?), to men who have to produce a verifiable product the truth of their condition is clear. Work is war and as such has no room for democracy. Neither tools nor materials respect the will of any majority but only the skill and the power of individuals. In countries where the workers have won (or been given) the right to make managerial or production decisions, efficiency, quality, and output have suffered accordingly.

What Dickens doesn't say can be inferred from such failures. Democracy should be left where the Founding Fathers of this republic sought it: in political and public life and leisure, where mistakes are not punished as grievously as at work.

Dickman ends his well-organized book (the text is fluid and uncluttered, with all the notes and appendices in the second half of the volume) somewhat ominously. Quoting Professor Clyde Summers' comment upon the Supreme Court decision in the 1944 *Medo Photo Supply Corporation* vs. *National Labor Relations Board* case, Dickman argues that, "Under the American version of industrial democracy . . . the real 'locus of power' is 'not vested in the majority' of workers, 'but in the union as an entity wholly apart from the governed employees. . . . Whether the union is still approved by the majority is irrelevant. Its power continues.'" This, argues Dickman, of a situation basically unchanged to this day, is what "may fairly be described as the beginning of a fascistic regulation of our quasi-syndicalist system of industrial democracy." (MS)

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was reported from Brussels that the worldly possessions of René Magritte would be auctioned off as a result of a legal squabble involving the artist's 77 distant relations. Among the lots: Madame Magritte's black jacket (estimated at £8), a double bed (£80), and a few bundles of books tied together with string (£8 each), in addition to a skull, a violin with broken strings, and a transistor radio. The artist's famous bowler hat, as well as his easel and his palette, will be auctioned off at a later date by Sotheby's London, along with the paintings.

Tuesday, March 31. *The Sun* runs a list of 20 "things you never knew" about Vincent Van Gogh. No. 4: "Van Gogh started out as a miner—so he could preach Christianity to the workers." No. 18: "Sir Alfred [Chester Beatty] could afford his impressionist paintings because he made a fortune from mining."

A Newman cartoon in *The London Daily News*. A woman is looking at the *Sunflowers*. Caption: "At that price I'd have expected orchids."

The Sun points out that the Monday auction's mystery buyer has paid £1,650,000 a stem. A Christie's spokesman is quoted as saying they were "absolutely cock-a-hoop."

The Daily Mirror observes that the cost of Lot 83 would, among other things, "pay for the education of 16,000 London secondary school kids for a year" or "solve the National Health Service nursing shortage by paying for the year's wages of 3,200 nurses" or "fund 800,000 unemployed for a week." In a happier vein, it could also "buy a fleet of Rolls Royce Silver Spirits—363 of them" or "buy ten Challenger tanks with spare change left over for the ammunition."

The Daily Express reports that as the auctioneer's hammer went down, novelist Jeffrey Archer said: "That's it, my next book will definitely be on the art world. I have never seen such an exciting finale."

Wednesday, April 1. *The Guardian*, in an editorial, said the £24.75 million paid "for the most expensive *helianthus annuus* in the world" was "equivalent to nearly a third of the gross domestic product of a poor country like Bhutan," and drew appropriate conclusions about the "game for megamillionaires, satiated with material possessions, who are making a play for the finite quantity of what the late Fred Hirsch called 'positional goods.'" The money should have been used to buy "hospitals, schools, and homes," or at least "thousands upon thousands of paintings by aspirant artists around the world among whom would be this century's Van Gogh condemned to lifetime penury." Best of all, this would deny Christie's the £2.25 million commission it earned "for a couple of minutes of hammer holding."

April Fools' joke: a fake, duplicate *Sunflowers* was painted and displayed to greet visitors at Christie's sale rooms in St. James's.

The Guardian cannot let go of the story. The buyer "could have provided 1,000 artists with £25,000," it says dreamily in a signed news article. He could have bought "*The Guardian* at 25p a day for 320,513 years." He could have provided "1,235 specialised tractors for Algeria."

The Times speculates about the identity of the mystery buyer: Stavros Niarchos? The Sultan of Brunei? Norton Simon?

A MAC cartoon in *The Daily Mail*. Two men in evening dress, one of them on crutches and missing an arm, are talking in front of the *Sunflowers*. Caption: " . . . And this one's by that

The Duchess of Windsor's plain wedding ring, inscribed "To Wallis from David," fetched £74,073.

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artist who cut off his ear—it cost me an arm and a leg." "Diary" reports that Sylvester Stallone "has decided it's time he went into art . . . and even hired a curator named Susan Guggenheim." "He says he doesn't care how much things cost because it's all in a good cause—culture."

A Cookson cartoon in *The Sun*. A middle-class couple with the *Sunflowers*. Husband, dejected: "It doesn't go with the curtains!" Japanese billionaire Nobutaka Shikanai is hotly tipped as the mystery buyer. "According to art experts, Van Gogh had a yen of his own—a yen for Japanese art!" This leads to jokes. "The price was ridiculous—you could have bought some real sunflowers for that kind of money." *The Guardian* obligingly calculates: "33,000 tons of sunflower seeds." *The Sun*: "The only way to get a Van Gogh at a reasonable price these days is to keep your ear to the ground."

The Independent reports the discovery, by a Greek peasant on the island of Melos, of the Venus de Milo arms. The arms have been transported under escort to the Louvre where it was announced that "they are a perfect fit." Melina Mercouri, true to form, "may decide to exhibit the arms separately in a Greek museum."

Christie's announces pre-tax profits of £18.3 million for 1986, £6.1 million better than the previous year, and its shares rise 5p in response to the news. Sotheby's also reports a record year, with gross sales of £612.5 million.

High bid of £24.75 million netted Van Gogh's Sunflowers *for a mystery buyer.*

Thursday, April 2. *The Times* reviews Tuesday night's auction at Sotheby's. Van Gogh's *Les Chardons* —dated to August 1888, same month and year as the first four *Sunflowers* —which the artist described as "two thistles in a vague field, thistles white with a fine dust on the road," was sold for £260,000. The auction is described by *The Guardian* as "a minor affair."

Joke in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Did the 25 million include the frame?"

Friday, April 3. Front page of *The Times*: "Windsor gems fetch £20 million on first night."

Saturday, April 4. As the Windsor gems fetch another £10 million, the Van Gogh story dies. The Duchess' plain wedding ring, inscribed "To Wallis from David," estimated at £600, goes for £74,073. The Duke's pipe cleaner makes £12,000. A pearl handle broken off the Duchess's handbag, sells for £18,500. A silver vesta case inscribed "To David" from his brother Harry ("scrap value": £5) sells for £12,346. The Duke's swords are bought by Mohamed Al Fayed, owner of Harrods, for £2,000,000: "I wanted Harrods, as a great British institution, to have these."

Sunday, April 5. Anthony Holden in *The Sunday Times* describes the "Geneva spectacle of wealthy and greedy Americans baying in pursuit of the Windsor heritage"—for the benefit of a French medical institute. "Salt in the wounds of Britain's impoverished art heritage, which had spent the beginning of the week watching helplessly as foreign megabucks hijacked Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*." Highbrow sentiment, lowbrow syntax from here on out.

The Sunday Times Magazine publishes a color spread captioned "Pretty Little Thing Seeks Ideal Home": eight ways to frame *Sunflowers*, since it appears that "there are no rights and wrongs when it comes to hanging the Van Gogh." Some of the choices: a sculptured frame made from wood laminates" £125), "a papier-mâché frame with elegant sweep" (from £65), and "the orange-box look for the do-it-yourself fan."

Sic transit gloria mundi.

Robin Weisman is archivist in the impressionist department of Sotheby's London.

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